

# **The role of national trade union organisations in South Africa's foreign policy processes: 1999-2012**

by

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## **Declaration**

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## **Abstract**

The role and influence of interest groups and non-state actors in the foreign policy process remains an interesting topic for debate. This study explores the role of three South African trade union organisations, COSATU, FEDUSA and Solidariteit, in the foreign policy process of South Africa. It asks what role these trade union organisations played between 1999 and 2012 in the South African foreign policy process and what factors had a bearing on that role.

The core argument of this study is that trade union organisations participate in creating public awareness of foreign policy issues among its members and the broader population. Through this role they, in turn, get involved in the foreign policy debate by promoting the participation of the masses. The dual approach of quantitative and qualitative content analysis of online news articles, statements and policy documents produced interesting results about the factors that motivate trade union interests in the South African foreign policy process.

The main findings show that South African trade union organisations attempt to influence or engage in the economic and foreign policy processes when it affects their members. Their economic focus is on the extent to which economic factors have a bearing on how the macro-economic policy of the state favours the wealth and development of its citizens over the financial gain of international investors.

Interesting findings are presented by the political factors that have a bearing on trade union organisations' roles in the foreign policy process of South Africa. The results show that trade union organisations have an inherent interest in the strengthening of democratic values, governance and the protection of human rights. Similar to the analysis of economic factors, it was found that South African trade unions show a greater interest in foreign policy events or issues that affect trade unions or workers domestically or in other states. This can be attributed to the strong sense of solidarity among trade union organisations for greater representation in political and policy processes.

The findings of this study imply that South African trade union organisations are part of a growing trend among non-state actors and domestic interest groups that take an interest in issues and events beyond national borders. The results of this study correspond with arguments made in existing literature that South Africa trade union organisations play a minimal role in the making of foreign policy.

## Opsomming

Die rol en invloed van belangegroepe en niestaatsrolspelers in die vorming van buitelandse beleid bly 'n interessante onderwerp vir bespreking. Hierdie studie verken die rol van drie Suid-Afrikaanse vakbondorganisasies – Cosatu, Fedusa en Solidariteit – in die ontwikkeling van die land se buitelandse beleid. Dit ondersoek die rol wat hierdie organisasies tussen 1999 en 2012 in buitelandse beleid gespeel het, en die faktore wat daardie rol beïnvloed het.

Die kernargument van hierdie studie is dat vakbondorganisasies hul lede sowel as die groter publiek van kwessies met betrekking tot buitelandse beleid help bewus maak. Deurdat hulle massadeelname aanmoedig, word die organisasies op hulle beurt by die debat oor buitelandse beleid betrek. Die dubbele benadering van kwantitatiewe én kwalitatiewe inhoudsontleding van aanlyn nuusberigte, verklarings en beleidsdokumente bring interessante resultate oor die redes vir vakbondbelangstelling in Suid-Afrikaanse buitelandse beleid aan die lig.

Die hoofbevindinge toon dat Suid-Afrikaanse vakbondorganisasies die vorming van ekonomiese en buitelandse beleid probeer beïnvloed of daaraan deelneem wanneer dit hul lede raak. Ekonomies konsentreer hulle veral op die mate waarin die makro-ekonomiese beleid van die staat die welvaart en ontwikkeling van sy burgers bo finansiële gewin vir internasionale beleggers stel.

Dit is egter veral die politieke beweegredes vir vakbonddeelname aan die land se buitelandse beleid wat insiggewende resultate oplewer. Die studie bevind dat vakbonde 'n inherente belang het by die versterking van demokratiese waardes en bestuur, en die beskerming van menseregte. Soos met die ekonomiese faktore, dui die ontleding van die politieke faktore ook daarop dat Suid-Afrikaanse vakbonde 'n groter belangstelling toon in gebeure of kwessies insake buitelandse beleid wat vakbonde of hul lede binnelands sowel as in ander state raak. Dít kan toegeskryf word aan die sterk samehorigheidsgevoel onder vakbondorganisasies om gesamentlik beter verteenwoordiging in politieke en beleidsprosesse te bekom.

Die bevindinge van hierdie studie impliseer dat Suid-Afrikaanse vakbondorganisasies deel uitmaak van 'n toenemende tendens onder niestaatsrolspelers en binnelandse belangegroepe om al hoe meer in kwessies en gebeure buite landsgrense belang te stel. Die resultate van die studie ooreenstem met die argumente gestel in bestaande literatuur dat Suid-Afrikaanse vakbond organisasies 'n beperkte rol binne buitelandse-beleidsmaking speel.

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## **Dedication**

*This dissertation is dedicated to my family.*

*Your love and support saw me through my triumphs and my failures.*

*Without your guidance and faith, I would not have come so far.*

*I love you all.*

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## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>AFL</b>	American Federation of Labor
<b>AFL-CIO</b>	American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organisations
<b>AIFLD</b>	American Institute for Free Labor Development
<b>ANC</b>	African National Congress
<b>BRICS</b>	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
<b>CIO</b>	Congress of Industrial Organisations
<b>COSATU</b>	Congress of South African Trade Unions
<b>CUT</b>	Central Única dos Trabalhadores
<b>DFA</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs
<b>DIRCO</b>	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
<b>FEDUSA</b>	Federation of Trade Unions of South Africa
<b>FOSAD</b>	Forum of South African Director-Generals
<b>GEAR</b>	Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy
<b>GNU</b>	Government of National Unity
<b>IBSA</b>	India, Brazil, South Africa Dialogue Forum
<b>ICFTU</b>	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>IRPS</b>	International Relations, Peace and Security
<b>ITUC</b>	International Trade Union Confederation
<b>MCTU</b>	Malawi Congress of Trade Unions
<b>MERCOSUR</b>	Mercado Comun del Cono Sur
<b>MinMecs</b>	National Ministers and Provincial Members of Executive Committees

<b>MITI</b>	Ministry of International Trade and Industry
<b>MWU</b>	Mynwerkersunie
<b>NAFTA</b>	North American Free Trade Agreement
<b>NLC</b>	National Labor Committee
<b>NPC</b>	National Planning Commission
<b>OATUU</b>	Organisation for African Trade Union Unity
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>PCAS</b>	Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Services
<b>PCC</b>	Presidential Coordinating Council
<b>PRC</b>	People's Republic of China
<b>RDP</b>	Reconstruction and Development Programme
<b>ROC</b>	Republic of China
<b>SA</b>	South Africa
<b>SACP</b>	South African Communist Party
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SADTU</b>	South African Democratic Teacher's Union
<b>SAWID</b>	South African Women in Dialogue
<b>SATUCC</b>	Southern African Trade Union Co-ordination Council
<b>SMU</b>	Social Movement Unionism/ Social Movement Union
<b>TAC</b>	Treatment Action Campaign
<b>TUC</b>	Trades Union Council
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNSC</b>	United Nations Security Council
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>USLAW</b>	U.S. Labor against the War
<b>WEF</b>	World Economic Forum

<b>WFTU</b>	World Federation of Trade Unions
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization
<b>ZCTU</b>	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and rationale

South African trade unions are more than economic interest groups. They are also political organisations taking a strong interest in the economic and social planning of the state. Historically, trade unions in South Africa have played a formative role in the country's past and served as movements of change that not only fought for equality and better conditions in the workplace, but also for similar change within the broader society (Webster, 1998: 44–46).

Numerous studies have been done on the role of South African trade unions in the workplace, in the economic development of the country, their political significance and power in society and in South African civil society (e.g., Bassett & Clarke, 2008; Buhlungu, 2010; Noge, n.d.; Reddy, 2010; Hlatshwayo, 2011). A literature search of South African trade unions produces a plethora of articles focused on the role of the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU). However, few studies explore the role of other South African trade union organisations. A further limitation within the vast studies done on South African trade unions is that most of these studies focus on the domestic role of these organisations.

Recent trade union activities have sparked new interest in their participation in South Africa as trade unions have now been compelled to extend their political interest beyond domestic policy-making since the South African economy has become more internationalised, South African trade unions have, therefore, become more vocal on the government's handling of foreign policy issues and its economic relations with other states. A noteworthy and well-publicised example of this is the political crisis in Zimbabwe where trade union organisations, along with other civil society groups, launched their criticisms against the South African government's policy of quiet diplomacy with the Zimbabwean government (Police order Cosatu out of Zimbabwe, 2004; Nduru, 2004). Similarly, trade union organisations in South Africa have raised their concerns over trade deals and economic agreements with the People's Republic of China, Israel and Swaziland (Mataboge, 2009).

South African trade union organisations have even voiced their opinions on how the South African government should handle certain foreign policy questions by their call for a stronger government response towards countries that violate human rights and abuse the processes of democracy (Recall of ambassador "premature", 2010; Government under siege for "weakness" on Dalai Lama, 2011; Remember 1976, ANC Youth League tells Swazis, 2011).

Existing studies on the role of South African trade unions in the foreign policy processes of the SA government focus largely on the activities and foreign policy interests of COSATU (Hudson, 2010; Landsberg, 2010a, 2011). The existing literature also gives a broad perspective on the role of COSATU in the foreign policy processes of the South African government; summarising the role of COSATU in their analyses of the position of civil society in the foreign policy-making process. However, there is no attempt at taking a more focused study of COSATU's role in the foreign policy process by factoring in, for example, a) the reasons behind the organisation's interest in foreign policy issues, or b) the methods and tools used by COSATU to raise their opposition to, or support for certain foreign policy decisions made by the South African government. Moreover, existing studies do not attempt to explore the role of other trade union organisations in South Africa's foreign policy process i.e., the continuous process, through which the state plans, develops, implements, negotiates, and evaluates its foreign policy decisions.

It is this realisation that serves as the rationale for this particular study. Since existing studies have yet to conduct a more focused analysis on the role of trade unions in South African foreign policy processes, this study will explore the roles of three South African trade union organisations (COSATU, FEDUSA and Solidariteit) in the foreign policy process and, therefore, analyse the statements and activities of these three trade union organisations in sum. It will also separately find the factors that motivate and contribute to their interest in South Africa's foreign policy process.

An examination of the role trade union organisations is expected to reveal useful detail on the involvement of certain domestic actors in the foreign policy process. This study was also particularly inspired by recent foreign policy debates and events in South Africa in which the trade unions began to advocate foreign policy preferences and criticism of government decisions in that regard.

## **1.2 Research question and aims**

### **1.2.1 Research question**

The research question that will guide this study is:

*What role have trade unions played in South Africa's foreign policy processes in the post-apartheid era, and what are the factors that have had a bearing in this regard?*

Unlike studies that focus on the role of COSATU in their research, the above research question is purposefully broadened to include observations of the foreign policy activities of more than one trade union organisation as well as COSATU. This will enable a study of the participatory trends of three trade union organisations in SA's foreign policy process.

The aim of using the broad term of 'foreign policy processes' is to include a wider range of foreign policy issues and events faced by South Africa between 1999 and 2012. In this study, the term refers to the continuous process through which a state plans, develops, implements, negotiates, and evaluates its political and economic relations with other states. This also encompasses its international image, taking into consideration external and internal feedback and influences.<sup>1</sup> This study will assess the foreign policy process of South Africa after apartheid, when the democratic transition allowed trade unions to play an active role in the policy-making process of the new dispensation in the country.

Furthermore, the aim of the research is to understand the role of trade unions in the state-centric process of foreign policy: What are the factors that motivate a role in the foreign policy process? How do trade unions play that role? An exploration of these questions should illuminate some trends in their international activities and ought to lead to a better understanding of the role that interest groups could play in the foreign policy process.

### **1.2.2 Aims of research**

The research objectives of this study are:

1. To review the literature on the political and international role of trade union organisations in historical context.
2. To briefly contextualise the foreign policy process of South Africa between 1994 and 2012 and the role played by interest groups in that process.

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<sup>1</sup> Further elaboration of the concept of the foreign policy process is dealt with in Section 1.5.1.

3. To analyse the role of trade union organisations in South Africa's foreign policy process from 1999 until 2012 drawing on secondary and primary data sources.

### **1.3 Literature review**

The foreign policy process, although it remains a state-centric process, is no longer controlled by a perfect monopoly of government actors. It now includes a variety of non-government actors attempting to influence the process through various channels and strategies. Moreover, scholars recognise the role of intermestic forces within the foreign policy process (Putnam, 1988; Risse-Kappen, 1991).

Certainly, the one particular interest group that has made its mark in international politics is the trade union movement. The literature on trade unions and their influence on the international foreign policy process is limited to a few case studies on American and British trade unions during the Second World War and the Cold War (Price, 1945; Duverger, 1972; May, 1975; Taylor, 1989). In this period, trade unions played a significant role in the foreign policy processes and international relations of their governments. The trade union movement in itself is international, owing to its organisational history. Trade unions were motivated by the ideological principle of international solidarity to engage with other trade unions but also other state actors in order to build a global order in which the rights and power of labour were upheld and strengthened (Breitenfellner, 1997; Waterman, 1999; Munck, 2002).

The internationalisation of production and the increasing interdependence among states have, however, necessitated the participation and involvement of national trade union organisations in the foreign policy processes of the state (Battista, 2002; Anner & Evans, 2004; Collomp, 2005). Furthermore, trade union organisations are no longer strictly limited by their role as representatives of workers' interests (Eckstein, 1960; Munck, 1999, 2002). Waterman (1998, 1999) and Munck (1999, 2002) conceptualise the current trend of political unionism as social movement unionism in which unions are engaging in social and political issues that incorporate a broader social demographic than only workers. The literature also shows that trade unions from developing countries have adopted an organisational identity of social movement unionism which enables them to pursue a more flexible and diverse scope of interests. Trade unions in developing economies have been, by virtue of their political context, compelled to engage in the political and economic development of their states (Millen, 1963: 4–8).

Although the existing literature recognises the role played by trade union organisations in the foreign policy process within the North American, Latin American and Asian contexts (Williamson, 1994; Wilford, 2002; Sustar, 2005; Waters & Daniels, 2010), few studies have been conducted on the role of trade unions in the foreign policy process within the African context.

## **1.4 Analytical framework**

The analytical framework for this study will be drawn from the literature on trade unions and their role in international relations and foreign policy processes. Although a comprehensive theory on this topic does not exist, the existing literature on this topic serves as a useful background and foundation on which to build such an analytical framework for this research.

### **1.4.1 Trade union internationalism**

Trade unions are by nature international organisations with interests that transcend national borders. According to Price (1945: 2), trade unions and the labour movement at large pursue international solidarity with other labour organisations, because workers around the world share similar economic and social problems and interests. His argument, although made in the context of the post-Second World War period, still resonates today with the effects of globalisation on the interests of the labour movement. The international capability and increased mobility of capital necessitates that trade union organisations pursue an interest in economic, political and social issues taking place in other countries, particularly those countries where the interests of the working class are threatened or undermined (Munck, 2002: 171).

However, according to the literature there are also limits to the internationalism pursued by trade union organisations. On the whole, trade union organisations will become active in international issues or the domestic events of another state when the rights of workers are threatened, and they will also do so when the issue – whether political or economic – has the effect of spilling over national borders or affecting the livelihood their members (Breitenfellner, 1997: 543).

The pursuit of international solidarity itself is chiefly motivated by four elements: benevolence, empathy, mutual benefit, and common identity or situation (Bieler, Lindberg, & Pillay, 2008a: 271). A further theoretical argument that guides the analysis of the study is that trade unions generally pursue a programme of accommodative solidarity which “seeks to

level out social conditions by supporting union organisation and improved wages and working conditions in countries to which capital seeks to relocate production” (Bieler et al., 2008a: 274).

#### **1.4.2 Organisational structure of trade union organisations**

The second theoretical point drawn from the literature is that the structural factors of trade union organisations play a part in the degree of influence they have, as well as the particular interests they would pursue and advocate in the policy-making process. Organisational structure refers to the characteristics and make-up of an organisation. Trade union organisations share one key characteristic: they are organised to represent the interests of their core membership, i.e., the workers. However, these organisations are diverse in their organisational structures, membership base, affiliations and organisational objectives (Phelan, 2007: 11). There are few recent studies on the role of organisational structure as a contributing factor in trade union influence; even so, earlier studies written in the 20<sup>th</sup> century still provide useful theoretical arguments with regard to this relationship. Taylor (1989) provides a comprehensive theoretical base for the relationship between a trade union’s organisational structure and its influence in policy-making. His central argument is that trade unions are by nature political organisations, but that “within capitalist industrialised states, [these organisations] are relatively powerless and therefore reactive and defensive in their political behaviour” (Taylor, 1989: xiv). His main hypothesis on the relationship between structure and political behaviour and influence is that “a centralised union movement composed of a few industrial unions with a collectivised ethos enjoying a high density of membership will be more influential than a decentralised movement with many unions and a low density membership” (Taylor, 1989: 18).

Eckstein (1960), in his research on pressure group politics, similarly argues that certain group characteristics are likely to determine their effectiveness in having their demands and interests met in any form of government policy or activity. He suggests the following characteristics as factors in the relationship between organisational structure and influence: physical resources, size, organisational cohesiveness, and political skills (Eckstein, 1960: 34).

Duverger (1972) shares the theoretical arguments above that organisational structure plays an important role in an organisation’s behaviour and influence on policy-making. However, he takes the argument a step further by distinguishing between mass and traditional pressure groups, arguing that trade union organisations exemplify mass pressure groups and that the

size of the group is its primary source of strength (Duverger, 1972: 115). Moreover, mass pressure groups like trade unions, have the ability to organise large sectors of the population and although having a single objective, are directed towards the interests of society apart from the interests of its support-base (Duverger, 1972: 115).

Apart from the structural features of size, organisational form and organisational cohesiveness, Duverger (1972) makes an interesting argument that the relations between political parties and pressure groups can also be a factor in the influence and role pressure groups play in the policy-making process. He mentions three possible relationships between pressure groups and political parties: a) where the pressure group is more or less subordinate to the party; b) where parties are more or less subordinate to the pressure group; and c) where equality exists between party and pressure in the pursuit of a common objective (Duverger, 1972: 117–121). Trade union organisations generally occupy a position of equality with political parties within the party-pressure group relationship.

In assessing the Scandinavian context, Duverger (1972: 120) argues that it is apparent that political parties are not subordinate to unions, nor are unions subordinate to political parties, but that they collaborate very closely with one another. Furthermore, trade union organisations, particularly in Europe, Latin American, Asia and Africa have tended to align themselves or affiliate with political parties who share their social and political objectives (Beckman & Sachikonye, 2010). Beckman and Sachikonye (2010: 12) also note that some unionists believe that a closeness with the governing party will enhance their influence, but these authors also argue that politically-affiliated unions do experience tension when balancing this increased influence with their organisational autonomy. The question then arises whether politically-affiliated trade union organisations have greater access or greater influence in the policy process than those trade union organisations that are non-affiliated.

### **1.4.3 Social movement unionism**

The third theoretical argument aligned with the arguments made above, is the development of a particular kind of unionism among trade union organisations, namely, social movement unionism (SMU). Ferus-Comelo and Novelli (2010: 38) argue that social movement unionism “prioritizes the organization of workers into unions to respond collectively to social problems while attempting to defend, exercise and extend the boundaries of citizenship”. SMU carries the vision of social justice, social change and political struggle (Ferus-Comelo & Novelli, 2010: 38–39). Social movement unions take on a wider range of social, political

and economic issues and are aware that the interests of workers are no longer confined to the workplace, but connect with the interests of society at large and also transcend national boundaries.

## **1.5 Conceptualisation**

The following concepts will be used throughout this study and will inform the methodology and analysis of the data.

### **1.5.1 Foreign policy process**

Foreign policy is generally described as an extension of public policy. This can be ascribed to the relationship between a state's domestic political environment and its international relations with other states. The South African context is particularly fitting to the former relationship. South Africa's foreign policy-making process is moulded by a variety of interests and influences (Gumede, 2011; Landsberg, 2011). Taking into consideration the complexity of the foreign policy-making in any context or state, it is best described as a process rather than an outcome set in stone. Gumede (2011: 166) describes public policy as a process because it "emerges from the interaction of many people representing many interests, building on existing activities and institutions which themselves have become an interest".

This study moves forward from this assumption and perceives foreign policy, like all public policy, as a process culminating from a variety of interests and informed by signals from the external and internal political environment. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on the foreign policy process as a whole, rather than focusing on a particular stage of the process.

The role of trade unions in the foreign policy is an understudied phenomenon; however, scholars are unanimous in observing a minimal or non-existent role in the foreign policy-making process. Since a policy process encompasses more than just the decision-making stage (Van der Waldt, 2001: 93–98), this dissertation proceeds with the following conceptualisation of the foreign policy process, inspired by an interpretation devised by Nel and Van Wyk (2003)<sup>2</sup>:

*The continuous process, through which a state plans, develops implements, negotiates and evaluates its political and economic relations*

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<sup>2</sup> The article authored by Nel and Van Wyk (2003: 51) defines foreign policy as "collective action taken by citizens, either through the state or through other collective means, to respond to, and shape, public policy beyond the borders of their state".

*with other states, as well as its international image, taking into consideration external and internal feedback and influences.*

### **1.5.2 Trade unions**

Trade unions are economic pressure groups protecting the interests of wage-earning or salaried workers in a particular trade or industry. However, the socio-political and economic realms are inherently connected and can rarely be separated. For this reason, trade unions are by nature political organisations (Buhlungu, 2010). In South Africa, trade unions are highly politicised and their interests often transcend the economic well-being of their memberships. South African workers are largely unionised and depend on these unions to negotiate their employment benefits and other shop-floor interests (Webster & Buhlungu, 2007: 416–417, 422–423).

In addition to shop-floor representation, South African trade unions have assumed a political role in their activities. This can be ascribed to the historical legacy of South African unions representing their members on a variety of issues that affect their interests and economic position (Freund, 2007). For this reason, the study will proceed with the idea of trade unions being political actors as well as economic interest groups. Moreover, this study will move forward by referring to these organisations as trade union organisations – a collective term for both trade union federations and singular trade unions.

### **1.5.3 Interest groups or pressure groups?**

Wilson (1990: 1) defines interest groups as “organizations separate from government though often in close partnership with government, which attempt to influence public policy.” He argues that interest groups provide the institutional linkage between government and sectors of society, stating further that organised interaction between government and society takes place through interest groups (Wilson, 1990: 1–2). Scholars are divided on how we should refer to organised groupings of societal interests aimed at influencing the government. Some scholars prefer to speak of pressure groups instead of using the term interest groups. Eckstein (1960: 9–11) recognises the controversy over definitions “interest groups” and “pressure groups” and prefers the latter. He defines pressure groups as “pursuing collectively common political aims” motivated either by subjective attitudes and interests, whereas interest groups are “categoric groups” that are not necessarily driven to be involved in politics but have rather objective characteristics, pursuing political aims only when it serves their organisational interests (Eckstein, 1960: 9). Eckstein (1960: 11) further develops his

definition of pressure groups by including under his definition all groups “which pursue common political goals; that are engaged in activities other than political activities; by which the goals they pursue may be interests or causes; and that use include sanctions, arguments or petitions as their means of having their goals met”. This dissertation will move forward using both definitions. Trade unions are interest groups in the sense that they represent the interests of their paying members – salaried workers and wage-earning people. However, trade union organisations are also political actors, extending their activities beyond the objective goals of wage increases into the realm of the political. For this reason, both terms are useful in exploring the roles of trade unions both as interest and pressure groups, and will be used interchangeably throughout this study.

#### **1.5.4 International solidarity**

It can be argued that the idea of international solidarity within the labour movement and trade unionism in general stems from the Marxist principle “workers of the world unite” (Waterman, 1998; Ferus-Comelo & Novelli, 2010: 24). International solidarity can be defined as the collaboration among trade unions against the exploitation of workers around the globe. International solidarity does not necessarily exclude other state or non-state groups. The literature shows that trade unions can collaborate with their governments against other governments, with national and multinational corporations and even overseas workers (Battista, 2002; Ferus-Comelo & Novelli, 2010: 25; Van Goethem, 2010).

Bieler, Lindberg and Pillay (2008a: 271) note that international solidarity among trade unions is based on three components to be effective: empathy, mutual benefit and common situation or identity. Furthermore, Johns (quoted in Bieler et al., 2008a: 274–275) distinguishes between “transformatory” solidarity and “accomodatory” solidarity. Transformatory solidarity seeks to transform capital’s production of uneven development, recognising that the plight of the workers runs deeper than corporate abuse and the low wages; whereas accommodatory solidarity seeks to level out the social conditions of workers across the globe (Johns quoted in Bieler et al., 2008a: 274). The former originates from Marxist principles proposing the victory of the proletariat over capitalist exploitation – the foundation of international labour solidarity (Waterman, 1998; Munck, 2002). The latter seems to be the trend among trade unions forging international solidarity with other organisations.

## **1.6 Research design and methodology**

A qualitative design was selected in conducting the research using quantitative and qualitative content analysis. The central problem in qualitative-based research is to identify how people, individually or in groups, interact with their world (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2007: 99). The research question is an exploratory one, which can be best answered through the collection of data sources such as press statements, biographies, previous literature and studies, impressions, websites and policy documents (Neuman, 2011: 165). An exploratory approach was selected due to the dearth of research on the role of trade unions in South Africa's foreign policy process.

The qualitative design enabled looking at trends of participation of trade unions to gain a better understanding of their engagement in the foreign policy process. Owing to the exploratory nature of the study, the researcher analysed a variety of foreign policy events and issues featuring trade union involvement rather than focusing on one particular process. The foreign policy process is complex, influenced by a variety of actors and encompassing a wide range of issues of international and domestic interest. A focus on a single event or process would have restricted the researcher's ability to provide a comprehensive analysis.

### **1.6.1 Research paradigm and approach**

The study aims to explore which factors motivate the foreign policy engagement of South African trade unions. The nature of the study, therefore, necessitated the use of a qualitative approach to uncover trends and nuances that would be less apparent using a quantitative approach. This was informed by the interpretive paradigm of social sciences. Interpretive Social Science is rooted in *verstehen* where the primary goal is to study social action with a purpose (Neuman, 2011: 101). The interpretive approach is the "systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds" (Neuman, 2011: 102).

### **1.6.2 Research methodology**

Two data sources were selected in this research study: a) textual data, represented by media articles, statements and policy documents, and b) key informant interviews. Media articles gathered from online news websites served as primary sources of data. In their discussion of media and politics, Grossberg, Wartella, Whitney & Wise (2006: 357) argued that "media serve as potential sources of persuasion and decision-making, both directly, through

endorsements and editorials, and indirectly, as a vehicle for candidates' and parties' speeches, platforms and advertisements." Further, they asserted that information and persuasion through the media may lead to behaviour change or political activity (Grossberg et al., 2006: 357). National news publications and broadcasting agencies are important media used regularly by various groups and opinion leaders to express their opinions on current affairs and political issues (Schudson, 2002: 250).

#### ***1.6.2.1 Data sources***

Media articles were sampled from the news websites of the *Mail and Guardian*, *News24*, *Business Day Live*, *Rapport*, *Die Burger* and *Beeld*. Both English and Afrikaans media sites were used to make the data sample more representative and to generate a greater variety of news articles. Also, data was collected from the websites of the trade union organisations selected for this study: COSATU, FEDUSA and Solidariteit. Initially, articles would have been sourced from the SA-Media database, but preliminary data collection proved the database to be less effective in retrieving relevant articles. It was then decided, based on the data required and the nature of this study, to collect the sample from online media archives.

Sampling was done purposively, choosing articles and documents that included one or more of the keywords developed from the research question. The use of online news sites assisted the researcher to generate the most frequently occurring articles on trade unions and their involvement in, or opinions about South African foreign policy issues. The statements generated from trade union websites was used to supplement the data collected from news media websites. It ensured that the limitations of collecting data from online news-media did not undermine the quality of the data collected and the validity of the data sample. Making use of online news media, statements and policy documents found on trade union websites also served to cross-check the reliability of data from both sources. These documents were the main source of data for this study.

To increase the validity and reliability of the data sources collected from news media and trade union websites, interviews were conducted with both scholars and trade union leaders. These interviews served as a further means to gain more insight into the role of trade unions in South Africa's foreign policy process.

Professor Roger Southall (University of Witwatersrand) and Mr Dennis George (General Secretary of FEDUSA) agreed to be interviewed regarding this research. The interviews took place on 6 March and 14 March, 2013 respectively. The interviews were semi-structured to

maintain flexibility and allowed respondents to be more responsive in their answers and engage with the interviewer on particular topics of discussion (see Appendix B for interview guide used during interviews). This degree of flexibility allowed the interviewer to discern whether to dwell on a particular topic of discussion or to continue with questions outlined in the interview guideline. Ethical standards were strictly adhered to as set out by the Ethical Committee of Stellenbosch University and respondents were made aware of their rights and the responsibilities of the interviewer during the interview process (see Approval Notice for Ethical Clearance). These interviews were analysed in the same manner as were the statements and policy documents collected from trade union websites. The data collected from interviews were used to validate and support the findings of analysis.

The full sample of articles collected and the sample used during data analysis is filed and stored in a locked cabinet kept at the residence of the researcher. Electronic copies of these articles, the recordings made during interviews as well as the transcription notes taken during interviews are also kept locked in the cabinet.

#### ***1.6.2.2 Data collection and preparation***

During the textual data collection process the following keywords were used to find relevant data sources. Broad and general keywords were used in order to produce a wider sample range. These keywords included both the English and Afrikaans translation of the word/concept:

- **Trade union/labour union/vakbond**
- **Foreign/buiteland**
- **Foreign policy/buitelandsebeleid**
- **International/Internasionale**

These keywords were used in alternating combinations to produce relevant results. The keywords were previously tested during preliminary data searches and the combinations produced relevant results. A preliminary data search using focused keywords, for example, “South African foreign policy” or “international relations” produced limited results. It was then decided to use broader keywords which effectively produced a richer variety of results from which the data sample could be selected. However, search results also contained articles that did not have any relevance to the chosen keywords or the study. This error was reduced by using more than one data source and using the same combinations of keywords. With

reference to the sampling of primary data sources from trade union websites, keyword A had not been used to avoid redundancy.

Furthermore, the above-mentioned keywords had also been used in combination with the date-range proposed in the study e.g. 1999-2012. The period under examination in this study, was divided into the following date ranges:

- **1999-2003**
- **2004-2008**
- **2009-2012**

During the data collection process, the date ranges were customised to suit a particular search engine using three formats: **1999/01/01-1999/12/31**; **1999**; or using the data range as proposed above e.g., **1999-2003**.

After the results had been produced, a method of non-probability sampling was used to create a data sample for analysis. The researcher selected data relevant to answering the research question – therefore data which contained the relevant keywords were used during analysis. This was done by reading through every article produced during the search and purposefully selecting those that contained two or more of the chosen keywords. Data collection and sampling took approximately three weeks to complete. The total sample of articles collected from the chosen online news-media was 127 articles (n=127).

This method of sampling required the researcher to rely on personal discretion and judgement in selecting which data were relevant and useful. However, this did not hinder the reliability of the data because the use of a variety of media sources and interviews ensured that the researcher did not ignore or dismiss data generated during data collection.

### ***1.6.2.3 Coding process***

Data was coded according to specific themes and potential factors that motivate trade union participation or its interest in the foreign policy process. A process of data-driven coding and concept-driven coding was used to categorise and identify themes in the data to be used in data analysis. Data-driven coding generated themes that emerged from the data itself. This process of coding was suitable for the exploratory nature of the study, enabling the researcher to extract themes not found in the literature. Data-driven coding was conducted on a preliminary sample of 50 articles from the main data sample to test and refine the codes set by the researcher. Themes and factors found in the literature (as cited in Chapter Two and

Chapter Three) inspired the choice of issues used in conjunction with those concepts found during data-driven coding. Coding was done by manually assigning codes to each article depending on the issue on which it focused – therefore the number of times a concept or issue occurred within the article was not relevant to this particular study. The coding process could, therefore, be completed within two weeks.

The aim of coding and analysis was to find out which issues were prioritised by trade unions. It was thus logical to assign codes to an article that summarised the content of that article. The data sample of articles was printed and the researcher assigned codes to the data by hand, reading data samples and applying codes to the relevant information. This was done carefully and the process was repeated twice to reduce redundant and duplicate coding. Naturally there is a margin of error as the coding process was done manually. Appendix A includes the coding memo with full details and definitions.

#### ***1.6.2.4 Data analysis***

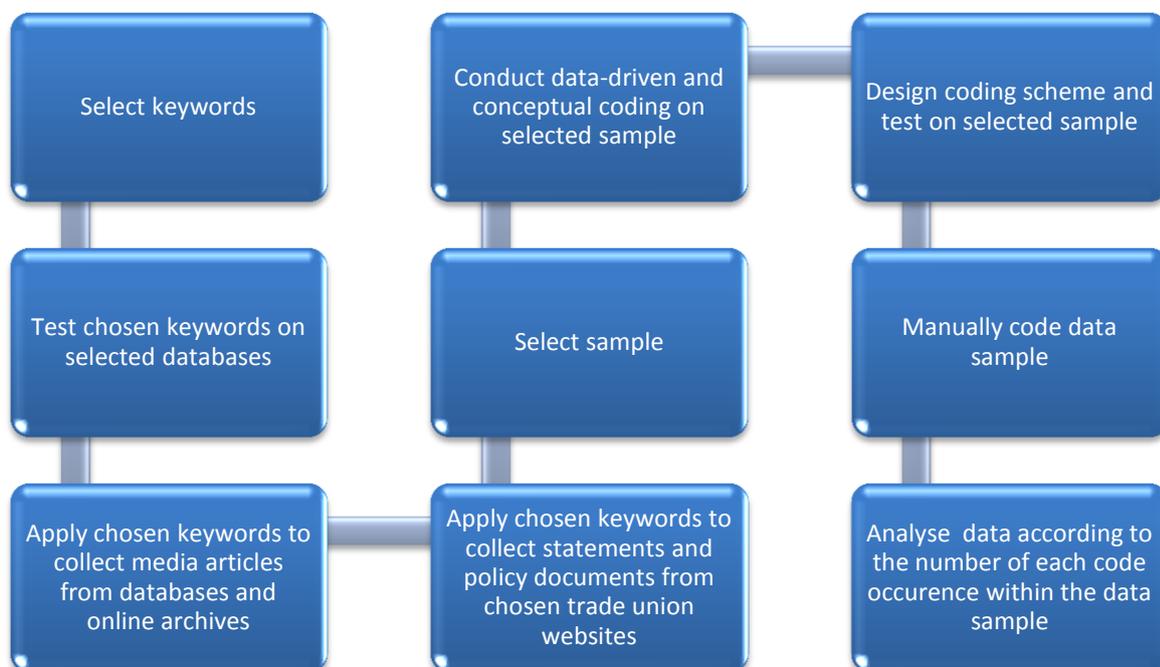
The method of content analysis has been used for this particular study. Content analysis of textual data and interview transcripts were conducted both quantitatively and qualitatively (Burnham, Lutz, Grant, & Layton-Henry, 2008: 259). Textual data samples and interview transcripts were analysed systematically and separately by looking for relationships between themes.

Firstly, textual data collected from news websites and trade union websites were coded and then counted to obtain the frequency of codes within the data sample of 127 articles for the three trade union organisations selected for this study. The frequency indicated the factors that had a bearing on the role of trade unions in the foreign policy process of South Africa. Secondly, the data sample had to be analysed to find out which factors motivated each trade union organisation separately, doing a similar frequency analysis for each trade union organisation. Apart from the frequency of factors counted for each trade union individually, the analytical framework was applied to the findings produced by analysis of trade union statements. This was to explore the relationship between the trade union's organisational structure and their role in the foreign policy process of South Africa. By taking into consideration that researcher bias and errors do creep in; textual data analysis was compared to results gathered from interviews transcripts. Burnham et al., (2008: 264) had argued that a disadvantage of quantitative content analysis was that "the importance of a theme is measured by the number of times it appears in the material". This disadvantage was reduced

through counting the occurrence of a code within the data sample in its entirety and not as it occurs within a single article. The research was also validated and tested for its reliability by comparing the findings of analysis from the sample of media articles to the findings and information held in trade union statements as well as the information gathered from personal interviews.

The objective of the data analysis was to answer the research question to find out the role of trade union organisations in the foreign policy process and what factors had a bearing on that involvement. Moreover, quantitative content analysis served to manually count the frequencies of codes found in the data sample and statistically capture and analyse the data using the Microsoft Office Excel programme. Qualitative content analysis served to uncover the relationship between organisational structure, the factors that emerged during the quantitative content analysis, and the motivations stated by trade unionists that explain their organisations' participation in South Africa's foreign policy processes. This was done with reference to the analytical framework as devised in Section 1.4. The diagram below (Figure 1.1) illustrates the research process used in this study from the planning stage to data analysis.

**Figure 1.1:** Diagrammatic illustration of the data collection, coding and analytical process



## **1.7 Research limitations and delimitations**

### **1.7.1 Research limitations**

The research on South African trade unions and their role in the foreign policy process of the country is one that demands extensive research and time-consuming data collection. Trade unions are predominantly focused on issues of domestic concern, which means that often their efforts to engage in the foreign policy process are seldom well-documented or elaborated upon. This particular topic came with the following challenges:

It was not possible to collect and analyse all existing articles and statements made by trade unions during the period of 1999 until 2012. The research was, therefore, limited by its data sample in the sense that it was a representative sample collected and sourced from online news archives. The research could have carried more theoretical and analytical impact if a longitudinal study, covering the period from 1994 until 2012, had been conducted. If access had been granted to analyse the policy documents and statements made by trade unions with regard to the foreign policy process, it would have assisted the impact of the research further.

Secondly, the study would have benefited from in-depth interviews with all trade union organisations with an interest in the foreign policy process of South Africa. As trade unionists and scholars form part of the elite, and who occupy powerful positions as leaders and experts in their fields, this made it fairly difficult to arrange and obtain permission for an interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 147). The difficulties of access to obtain and arrange interviews limited the analytical depth and equal representation of argument and opinion within the study. However, since the study is focused on an exploration of the roles of trade union organisations in the foreign policy processes, it does not limit the analytical value and worth of the study.

Thirdly, the data samples collected for this research were sourced from online news media archives. One limitation of this method of data collection was that articles with the most popular appeal were posted on online news websites (Burnham et al., 2008: 224) which limited the ability of the researcher to analyse chronological trends in trade union activity around international and foreign policy issues. However, it did allow the researcher to filter the issues that emerged as the most pressing concerns among South African trade union organisations.

### 1.7.2 Research delimitations

To conduct a study on the role of trade unions in South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy process, was an exhaustive task for two reasons. Firstly, the South African labour movement is represented by many trade unions, some politically aligned; some independent. This makes it difficult to include all trade union leaders in a discussion of this topic. Secondly, South Africa's foreign policy process is complex and has been described as 'inconsistent' (Serrao & Bischoff, 2009: 364). This made it difficult to track every activity of every actor before their input becomes policy.

This study is, therefore, limited to variables necessary to answer the stated research question: the post-apartheid foreign policy of South Africa, particularly its foreign policy processes between 1999 and 2012. This period includes the presidencies of Thabo Mbeki (1999-2008) and Jacob Zuma (2009-2012) respectively. These years are significant for the exploration of this topic because it marks the era in which trade unions became more vocal and critical towards the democratic government (Pottinger, 2008).

To delineate the study further, only three trade union organisations have been selected as foci for this study: the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA) and Solidariteit. Their selection was based on their domestic position and stance in the South African political environment, but also because these trade union organisations, sourced from preliminary data collection, have been the most vocal in issues of foreign policy and the international activities of the South African government (Webster & Buhlungu, 2007: 416–421).

COSATU is an obvious choice based on its political alliance with the governing party and the South African Communist Party. Also, COSATU is the most vocal critic of the government's foreign policy practices (Habib & Valodia, 2006; Police order Cosatu out of Zimbabwe, 2004; Government under siege for "weakness" on Dalai Lama, 2011). FEDUSA is the second largest trade union in South Africa, but is also a frequent actor in international relations, although not as outspoken as COSATU. The third union to be included in this study was Solidariteit, which although considered a small trade union, has been quite vocal on policy issues particularly those issues that have a direct effect on its members. It also should be noted that two of the organisations selected in this study are trade union federations (COSATU and FEDUSA) while the other is a trade union with no sub-affiliations (Solidariteit). This does not limit the analysis of the study but rather provides an analytical

opportunity to compare the different strategies and issue-interests between trade union federations and a single trade union.

## **1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE AND STRUCTURE**

Chapter One provided an overview and discussion of the research aims and objectives, the research methodology and the analytical framework that will be used during the analysis of the findings.

Chapter Two presents a review of the literature on the role of trade union organisations in South Africa's foreign policy process. It provides a discussion of the intermestic space which features the blurring of the boundaries between domestic and foreign policy. The chapter is based on the argument that the intermestic space is often occupied by domestic or transnational interest groups (of which trade union organisations are a part). It also provides a discussion on the nature of the international system and foreign policy and how it impacts the role of interest groups in international affairs and foreign policy processes. Furthermore, this chapter provides a review of the literature focusing on the political role of trade unions within the domestic political environment and thereafter, an in-depth literature review of studies that have been done on the role of trade union organisations in the foreign policy process.

Chapter Three takes an in-depth look at the foreign policy process of South Africa, beginning with a discussion of the core events and patterns that have dominated the foreign policy agenda of SA since 1994. Thereafter follows an overview of the core role-players within the South African foreign policy-making process. This chapter also takes a brief look at the various domestic interest groups that have played a role in the foreign policy process of South Africa – laying a foundation for the next chapter which presents a discussion of the research findings. Chapter Three has a distinct structure in that Sections 3.2 and 3.3 have been structured according to specific presidential administrative terms, namely the Presidencies of Nelson Mandela (1994-1999), Thabo Mbeki (1999-2008) and that of current President Jacob Zuma (2009-2012).

Chapter Four presents the results and findings of analysis. Firstly, it provides a brief discussion and outline of the coding process and the process of analysis. Secondly, it presents the results of the coding process as well as providing an analysis of those results. Thirdly, it provides a discussion and analysis of each trade union organisation's role in South Africa's foreign policy process and a summary of the main findings and theoretical insights found during the analysis of the findings.

Chapter Five concludes the research dissertation offering recommendations and suggestions for future studies as well as a summary of the findings and discussions in this dissertation.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the literature that has been written on the participation of interest groups in the foreign policy processes of a state. It contains a brief discussion on the relationship between the domestic and foreign policy-making processes and the role of interest groups, of which trade unions are a part. The sections that follow then discuss the concept of foreign policy and how it has changed from being state-centric to a more inclusive process. The sections thereafter explore what the existing literature says about the role of trade unions in the foreign policy process, and include a section dedicated to exploring the political role and structure of trade unions.

The literature consulted in this chapter served as an analytical guide to explore the role of trade union organisations in the foreign policy process. Four theoretical claims were highlighted in the literature which are:

- a) that the structure of the interstate system lends itself to the limitation of non-state actors playing a viable role in the foreign policy-making process of states;
- b) that trade union organisations in developing countries take on the organisational structures and roles of social movements, aptly named social movement unionism;
- c) that the effects of organisational structure and the agenda of trade unions contribute to the particular role that these organisations play in the policy processes of a state; and
- d) that trade union organisations are internationalist in their structure and organisational history which serves as an important foundation for their interests in the international political and economic system.

#### **2.1.1 The relationship between the foreign and domestic policy-making systems**

“Foreign policy begins at the water’s edge” was a phrase used to identify the line where domestic policy issues can be distinguished from international concerns (Snow, 2005: 3). This phrase, although no longer viable in the current international and domestic political setting, was considered a useful truism during an era where national interests would be defined by geographic location (Deutsch & Edinger, 1959; Du Plessis, 2006). Evidently, during the Cold War period and earlier, foreign policy was considered the exclusive domain of the state, its bureaucracy or, in some cases, personalised in the values and objectives of the

president or executive agency, as for example, Nelson Mandela and his human-rights centred approach to foreign policy and the role of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) in Japanese trade relations (Hill, 2003a: 59, 90; Snow, 2005: 96, 119). Systemic and actor-general theories developed in the context of the Cold War period and earlier contributed to the notion of an exclusive foreign policy process in which the role of non-state actors or the public in governance and international relations was considered undesirable and unnecessary (Lippmann, 1922; Almond, 1950; Viotti & Kauppi, 1993; Hudson & Vore, 1995; Elman, 2007).

This perspective of exclusivity of the foreign policy process has changed since the end of the Cold War. States and foreign policy bureaucracies have come to acknowledge the significant role played by non-state actors and non-governmental organisations in the domestic and international political environment (Hrebenar & Thomas, 1995; Uslaner, 1995: 369–373; Snow, 2005: 190–199). In addition, political and foreign policy elites understand and appreciate the role of domestic interest groups and the public in constraining or expanding the foreign policy options available to decision-makers and policymakers. For instance, in some foreign policy decisions, domestic support can be significant in ensuring the successful implementation of foreign policy just as domestic support can be unnecessary for the successful implementation of foreign policy (Putnam, 1988; Risse-Kappen, 1991; Foyle, 1999). Putnam (1988) explains this dynamic in his hypothesis of the two-level games played by national political leaders and diplomats. He hypothesized that if a smaller win-set (an acceptable policy option) was accepted at Level II (discussions with constituencies about whether to ratify agreements), the policy or agreement had a greater chance of acceptance at Level I (bargaining-process between negotiators) (Putnam, 1988: 436–439). He argued that negotiators have a better bargaining advantage if they have a domestic constituency that supported their demands and policy objectives during international policy negotiations or agreements with other states (Putnam, 1988: 440).

Despite the bargaining advantage that comes along with having the support of a domestic constituency during international negotiations or policy-making, domestic interest groups still play a marginal role in the foreign policy process, particularly in developing countries where the priority of domestic interest groups are on domestic prosperity and policy-making (Uslaner, 1995: 370–371; Van Goethem, 2010: 663). Furthermore, Foyle (1999: 9) argued that state officials prefer to exercise their own judgment and discretion in making and implementing foreign policy.

The above argument does not discourage a study into the role of domestic pressure groups in the foreign policy process. In fact, in both developing and developed countries, domestic pressure groups have been the political connection between the public (made up of their members and constituencies), and state officials, particularly in a political environment where procedural democracy is weak or the public has limited access to the policy-making process (Uslaner, 1995: 395; Ravenal, 2000: 333; Snow, 2005: 185; Held & Mephram, 2007).

Domestically, interest groups play an important role in educating the public about policy issues, as well as representing the policy preferences and demands of their members to relevant state officials and agencies. Keck and Sikkink (1998) in their study of transnational and domestic advocacy networks developed a typology of tactics used by these networks to persuade, influence or socialise the public or the state on particular issues and causes. These tactics include:

- a) information politics, the ability to quickly and credibly generate politically usable information and disseminate it to where it will have the most impact;
- b) symbolic politics, the ability to call upon symbols, actions or stories that make sense of a situation for an audience that is frequently far away;
- c) leverage politics, the ability to all upon powerful actors to affect a situation where weaker members of a network are unlikely to have influence; and finally
- d) accountability politics, the effort to hold powerful actors to their previously states policies or principles. (Keck & Sikkink, 1998: 16)

Keck & Sikkink's typology has a direct bearing on the tactics of transnational advocacy networks rather than on the tactics used by domestic actors that attempt to influence the national government's actions or implementations of a particular policy. However, the tactics of information politics and accountability politics are applicable to the tactics utilised by domestic pressure groups.

Snow (2005: 185) wrote that interest groups "collect the preferences and demands of their followers and represent those preferences to appropriate executive and legislative actors using the tactics of lobbying, education and pressure". Bloodgood (2011) also identified three mechanisms of influence used by American interest groups: a) campaign contributions and electoral pressure; b) strategic information transmission or expertise; and c) grassroots representation and mobilisation. These are but a few examples of how domestic interest

groups play a role as interlocutors between government and the public. There will be more discussion on the tactics used by trade unions later in this chapter.

Studies on the domestic role of interest groups far outnumber the studies focusing on the role of these groups in the foreign policy process. This can be attributed to the limited participation by domestic interest groups in the foreign policy process. Uslaner (1995: 370–371) provided possible reasons for the inactivity of US interest groups in American foreign policy. He argued that, a) the stakes are higher in foreign policy, b) that decisions need to be made quickly and are irreversible, c) that foreign nations are not entirely in the control of national policymakers, and finally, d) foreign policy issues are of less concern to most Americans than domestic policy (Uslaner, 1995: 370). These reasons relate to the political context of domestic interest groups in the USA, not the political context of interest groups within developing countries. In developing countries, the stakes are higher if they do not make an attempt to influence the foreign policy objectives and decisions of their governments (Noge, n.d.: 61). Moreover, although domestic policy is the primary concern for domestic interest groups, the increasing interdependence among different countries, makes it difficult to separate the boundaries between the domestic and foreign. International politics is subject to change, whether by sudden changes in policy or diplomatic relations or by gradual process and culmination of events (Mills, 2000). Therefore, the possibility of other actors, particularly non-state actors playing a more formative role in international politics cannot be ignored.

## **2.2 The nature of the international system and the foreign policy process**

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, foreign policy was narrowly defined – focusing on objectives formulated by state officials on how to manage and engage with other recognised state actors. Since the turn of the millennium, communication and information technologies and the internationalisation of domestic markets and economies have enabled non-state actors to play an active role in foreign relations. Foreign policy analysts have done studies on the relationship between domestic factors and foreign policy since the 1950s (Deutsch & Edinger, 1959; Herman, 1975; Putnam, 1988; Risse-Kappen, 1991) and have found that the concept of foreign policy and the scope of its process has changed since the collapse of Communism.

Hill (2003a: 3) defined foreign policy as “the sum of external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations.” He broke down the definition further by defining external relations as those activities that pertain to “official” acts that

include outputs from all parts of the governing mechanisms of the state while still relating to other international transactions that take place (Hill, 2003a: 3). Furthermore, Hill (2003a: 3) defined policy as the sum of official relations because otherwise every particular action can be regarded as a separate foreign policy. Foreign policy is “foreign” because it refers to a set and decisive manner of engagement with the outside world over which the state has no jurisdiction (Hill, 2003a: 3). This definition implies that official endorsement is crucial for policy or any international transaction to be considered official foreign policy.

Nel (1999: 124) and Landsberg (2011: 231) conceptualised foreign policy as “an official course of action, attitudes or preferences with regards to engagement with other states”. This definition agrees with the argument that the state remains the most important decision-maker in foreign policy processes. Despite the availability of instant information to non-state actors and the public, states remain the primary decision-makers in foreign policy formulations and primary participant in international relations. Non-state actors and the public still rely on their respective governments to control and manage relations with other states. Non-state actors require the infrastructure and established connections of the state to pursue international coalitions and activities. This dependence on the state can be attributed to the nature of the international system.

Neorealists have argued that the state is the primary unit of the international system because the state is the only actor possessing both hard and soft power, with the legitimacy to utilise these resources to affect change or act within the international system (Waltz, 1990; Wendt, 1992). Furthermore, the international system is anarchical – it does not possess a form of government to regulate state actions (Viotti & Kauppi, 1993: 3). Therefore, states remain the legitimate and dominant actors within the international system. Previously, the foreign policy of a state was considered the product of the collective government – assumingly devoid of political conflict and bargaining (Deutsch & Edinger, 1959: 6–7). Foreign policy was designed by the President, his/her executive agencies and a ministry of Foreign Affairs through a process of rational decision-making. This black-box/rational collective idea of the state was changed with the studies of Risse-Kappen (1991) and Allison and Zelikow, (1999).

Foreign policy scholars have written about an alternative or more inclusive definition of foreign policy. Hill (2003b: 238) wrote about “collective coping” which includes a broad range of official activity other than that conducted by diplomats and foreign ministers. Other scholars who devised a more inclusive conceptualisation of foreign policy were Nel and Van Wyk (2003). They defined foreign policy as “collective action taken by citizens, either

through the state or through other collective means, to respond to, and shape, public policy beyond the borders of their state” (Nel & Van Wyk, 2003: 51). Despite, the greater acknowledgment given to non-state actors, these authors still implicitly refer to the role of the state based on their references to “official activities” and collective action taken by citizens “through the state”. Nonetheless, these definitions recognise the multiplicity of international engagements by other actors besides the state. Although non-state actors do not necessarily replace or even endorse official foreign policy as formulated by state actors, they do have the potential to influence the government, directly or indirectly, on issues that deserve priority or acknowledgement on the foreign policy agenda (Foyle, 1999). Studies on the role of interest groups and non-state actors have noted the potential influence of these groups in bringing particular issues into the foreign policy agenda of the state or at least drawing the state’s attention to these issues (Wilson, 1990). Some analysts were of the opinion that these non-state actors and societal forces can be used in aiding the implementation of a particular foreign policy of a state (Putnam, 1988; Risse-Kappen, 1991; Foyle, 1999). Whether interest groups play a defining or effective role in the foreign policy process, is open to critical evaluation and study. One aspect that was supported by the existing research on the role and strategies of interest groups was that due to the nature of the international system, interest groups need the resources, infrastructure and, at times, the support of the state to achieve their objectives.

### **2.3 The political role of trade unions**

The unit of analysis featured in this study falls into the category of pressure groups. Pressure groups refer to groups who “pursue collectively common political aims” (Eckstein, 1960: 9–11). Pressure groups have been the focus of study by political scientists for years, stemming from the role and power of these groups to mobilise the public around a particular issue (Eckstein, 1960; Wilson, 1990). The scholarship on group politics was unanimous in its findings that pressure groups vary in the scope of their influence in politics and policy advocacy (May, 1975; Taylor, 1989; Wilson, 1990).

This thesis deals with the role of a particular type of pressure group – a group that has of late been receiving less attention in academic studies. Historically, trade unions have evolved with their environment and context, but this is dependent on the particular political culture of the state as well as the organisational culture and structure of the trade union itself (Duverger, 1972: 144; Eckstein, 1960: 22-23; Wilson, 1990: 32). What is interesting is that the claims

made by scholars *circa* the Cold War era are still relevant to current studies of these organisations. The context may have changed but the ideological and structural factors that bind trade unions still feature strongly in modern trade union organisations. Taylor (1989: xiv) argued that trade unions are inevitably political and that they are primarily reactive and defensive in their political behaviour. Eckstein (1960: 22) wrote in his influential text on pressure group politics, that pressure groups - including trade unions - possess greater continuity and are thus engaged in a wider variety of political activities outside their organisational mandate: "Trade unions play a more significant political role today than in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, not only because they are larger and better managed, but also because they are more widely accepted (Eckstein, 1960: 27–28). Munck (1999) explained that this politicization emerged from the increasing understanding among unions that they are not simply defending workers' rights at the place of work: "Workers are gendered, they are citizens and they are consumers too, often unions become 'populist' campaigning organizations...with a fluid view of how to pursue their struggle under contemporary capitalism" (Munck, 1999: 15).

These arguments point to the significance of organisational structure as a factor in political influence and behaviour. Eckstein (1960: 22-23) wrote that structure, policies and attitudes were determining factors in the relationship between pressure groups and government. Similarly, Taylor (1989: 22) argued that a strong relationship exists between the organisational structure of a trade union and their political influence or behaviour, keeping in mind that one must be careful to narrowly infer behaviour from structural factors. Organisational structure, in this case, can include factors such as the size of the organisation, the national political context, the demographics of its membership, or its political affiliation (Millen, 1963: 8–11; Scoville, 1973: 59-61; Kassalow, 1978). How much can structure or organisational characteristics reveal of the political behaviour among different trade unions? This question can illuminate interesting theories about the motivation behind union activities, particularly referring to their international role and behaviour.

Waterman (1998, 1999) and Munck (1999, 2002) conceptualised the current trend of political unionism as social movement unionism in which unions engage in social and political issues that incorporate a broader social demographic than only workers. Social movement unionism developed in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century when the economic position of trade unions declined, rendering the group less powerful and influential in the global economy (Waterman, 1998).

Consequently, unions, particularly in the Third World and Global South, developed a type of unionism fitting to the historical context in which they emerged.

Social movement trade unions have ensured their survival from the effects of globalisation and declining membership, transforming the organisation from a labour specific to a broad-based, socially conscious movement, capable of pursuing interests and issues outside of the realm of labour and employment. The South African trade union COSATU was mentioned by scholars as having successfully adopted the social union organisational type (Waterman, 1999: 248; Wood, 2004: 222). Social movement unions, by their nature, are more likely to engage in international activities and extend their interests beyond domestic policy (Ruppert, 2007: 5, 9).

So far, the discussion on the structure and political role of trade unions has illuminated the following key points. Firstly, as domestic actors, trade unions largely play the role of pressure group in their relations with government and business. Trade unions attempt to influence or shape policies that benefit their membership, and occasionally they engage in activities outside of their organisational purpose to affect structural changes to the political or economic system of the state (Millen, 1963: 81; Habib & Valodia, 2006: 228). The scope of their domestic activities and power largely depends on the organisational structure and objectives of trade unions individually. Secondly, trade unions in developing economies differ from their counterparts in developed economies. Trade unions in developing economies were compelled, by virtue of the political context in which they were established, to engage in the political and economic development of their states (Millen, 1963: 4–8). This background gives trade unions of the developing economies a more flexible and diverse scope of interest in their domestic roles. They are more likely to enter into an alliance with governmental, political or non-governmental groups to secure political influence and participation in issue-awareness campaigns and policy-making circles (Millen, 1963; Kassalow, 1978: 7–9).

## **2.4 Trade unions in foreign policy**

While much is known about the domestic/national role of trade unions, few studies have placed primary focus on the international role of trade unions. The unpopularity of this topic can be attributed to studies alluding to the decline of trade union activity and their political or economic influence since the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the dominance of state-centric approaches to the study of international relations. Furthermore, as one author suggested, trade

unions are more preoccupied by national policies and economic conditions than forging international solidarity with trade unions from other states (Costa, 2009: 45). Another obstacle to building international solidarity among trade unions is their organisational and ideological differences. When trade unions from the same country fail to set aside differences for the purpose of labour unity, it will be more difficult for them to form a truly global alliance of labour.

Ideologically, trade unions are internationalist by virtue of their interests as representatives of the labour movement (Waterman, 1998: 17). The internationalisation of the economy and the spread of domestic political and economic problems into the global realm contribute to the realisation among national trade unions that a global strategy is needed to solve the global crises of unemployment and the protection of worker's rights (Munck, 2002: 14, 16). Historically, the labour movement was founded on the principles of international solidarity and engagement (Spalding, 1992: 422). The internationalist foundation of trade unions and the labour movement was built on the historic rise and fall of the First, Second and Third International (Nettl, 1978; Waterman, 1998: 16–17; Munck, 2002: 137–140). The First International that began in Europe served as the basis for the international labour movement. It was built on three premises that still resonate within the labour movement: a) that the duty of the working class was to conquer political power in order to improve their conditions; b) that the workers of the world, if united, have strength in numbers; and c) finally the workers would need to pursue an active “struggle” in the foreign policies of their governments as part of the global emancipation of the working class (Price, 1945: 6). The Second International would be identified by its pursuit to build a united front of workers and to mobilise them behind international labour institutions and organisations that would lead the international labour movement in the global emancipation of the working class (Price, 1945). The Third International was characterised by the allegiance of workers from all countries for the Communist cause (Price, 1945).

In his survey of the effects on globalisation on the labour movement, Munck (2002: 163) showed that the issues that motivate international labour solidarity and which are a paradigm for, what he calls the “new labour internationalism”, are events that “cut across the boundaries of national/international, production/consumption, labour/community and so on”. Consequently, trade unions were motivated by the ideological principle of international solidarity to engage with other trade unions but also to engage with other state actors to build a global order in which the rights and power of labour were upheld and strengthened.

For this reason, it is not uncommon for trade unions to be interested in the foreign policy processes of their governments (Spalding, 1992; Battista, 2002). However, this phenomenon remains understudied as a scholarly topic of interest. So far, the literature that has been published illuminates two areas of trade union engagement: a) international solidarity with other state actors; and b) engagement in the national foreign policy process.

#### **2.4.1 International solidarity – building independent relations with other actors**

International solidarity pertains to trade union cooperation and engagement with other trade unions across national borders. Economies are now more interconnected than before, which presents new challenges to labour that often require collaboration and solidarity with labour abroad. Trade unions have come to realise from early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the changing economic climate necessitates international collaboration with other unions and social actors (Bieler, Lindberg, & Pillay, 2008b).

This is best illustrated in the study by Anner and Evans (2004). They analysed the attempts by American trade unions and non-governmental organisations to forge alliances with trade unions and non-governmental organisations from Latin America in a bid to uphold the rights of workers in the South. Their study found that these alliances were built around two issues facing workers in the South: a) the violation of workers' rights in Latin America in apparel-exporting zones and, b) macro issues concerning the establishment of more democratic forms of economic governance (Anner & Evans, 2004: 36, 40). Their research showed that union-NGO alliances in North and South America have been able to launch successful international campaigns on issues that affect workers economically and politically. Defending the rights of workers both nationally and internationally can be considered a primary motivation for a trade union to forge transnational links and launch international campaigns under the tenet of international solidarity of labour. This can be observed in the study by Collomp (2005) which focused on American labour forging international solidarity for labour victims of Nazism and fascism. The campaign to rescue labour victims included obtaining visas for political refugees, rescue missions and the distribution of aid and finance to victims stranded in Europe, North Africa and Asia (Collomp, 2005: 113). This alludes to another motivation behind trade unions pursuing international cooperation with other trade unions; international solidarity is often strengthened through the provision of aid and funding to support trade union activities under the threat of conflict or political turmoil (Spalding, 1992; Battista, 2002; Sustar, 2005; Waters & Daniels, 2010).

International trade union conferences and meetings also play a role in establishing international solidarity and cooperation with other trade unions. Van Goethem (2010) illustrated this in his article exploring the context of the support of the British TUC (Trades Union Council) and American AFL (American Federation of Labor) for their countries' respective foreign policies during the Second World War. Part of that support included forging relationships with Left-wing – and conservative trade unions to further advance the foreign policies of the state (Van Goethem, 2010: 665, 670–671). Van Goethem (2010: 665, 678) argued that this parallel diplomacy practiced by trade unions made them “indispensable allies during the War” and trade unions were to become “functions of [the state’s] interventionism” in the political affairs of other states. Alternatively, at national level, the national trade unions were reduced to “powers of cooperation” (Van Goethem, 2010: 678). During the Cold War, labour in the United States moved beyond mere monitoring and reporting of overseas labour developments and became more engaged in US foreign policy and diplomacy (Wilford, 2002: 45). Wilford (2002) conducted a study exploring the success and influence of the Labor Attache’s programme which had two main purposes: one, the reporting of overseas labour developments with possible implication for US security interests and; two, the cultivation of personal contacts with foreign labour leaders to influence their thinking and decisions in directions compatible with American goals (Wilford, 2002: 50). However, Wilford’s (2002) study focused on the role of individual labour personalities and their diplomacy and relations with foreign trade unions, which again, does allude to another motivation behind the pursuit of international solidarity; the global ambition of trade union leadership.

Economics and trade play an integral part in the forging of international solidarity among trade unions. Trade unions often cooperate with other unions transnationally when the economic well-being and state of employment of their membership is under threat by international trade agreements or capital investment by multinational – or transnational corporations. An example of this can be observed in the tri-national cooperation among Canadian, Mexican and American trade unions in their protest of the NAFTA agreement (Macdonald, 2003: 175–176). Macdonald (2003: 173) argued that “NAFTA has brought the issue of continental labor cooperation to the fore of labor union strategy, not as a well-meaning moral duty or empty political slogan, but as a necessary and concrete tactic in the neoliberal era of the regionalized production system”. Regionalism and globalisation have played a formative role in the renewed pursuit of international solidarity and cooperation

among trade unions. Ruppert (2007: 2) contended that “in a globalised world, labour movements are facing new challenges and must operate in other scopes, no longer only on the local or national spheres.” She argued this in the light of her research comparing the responses and actions of Brazil’s CUT (Central Única dos Trabalhadores) and South African trade union COSATU in their respective regional organisations namely, MERCOSUR (Mercado Comun del Cono Sur) and the SADC (Southern African Development Community) (Ruppert, 2007: 1). Her research found that both trade unions are social movement unions and both are actively involved in international relations with not only fellow unions in their regions but also other social groups and movements (Ruppert, 2007: 5). “Social movement unions surpass existing models of economic, political or political-economic unionism by addressing itself to all forms of work and by taking on socio-cultural forms and addressing itself to civil society” (Waterman quoted in Ruppert, 2007: 10).

However, international collaboration among trade unions cannot be generally assumed. There are certain factors that either encourage or discourage the engagement of trade unions in transnational activities. Bieler (2005) assessed whether European trade unions could develop into independent supranational actors. His research was motivated by the gap in the literature on the international role of trade unions, and he argued that mainstream approaches to studies in globalisation treat unions as purely domestic-level actors (Bieler, 2005: 462–463). He argued that one factor influencing whether European trade unions would cooperate at the European level depends on the possibility of their influence on policy-making within the European Union institution (Bieler, 2005: 467). Also, his study hypothesised that trade unions with a more “transnationalised” production structure were more likely to engage in intensive European-level cooperation, while national sector unions were less likely to engage at the European level (Bieler, 2005: 477–478).<sup>3</sup> However, Bieler (2005: 478) did contend that “the production structure does not determine union behaviour but creates only the possibility for particular actions”.

#### ***2.4.1.1 Foreign policy advocacy and parallel diplomacy by trade unions***

*Given the growing importance of international economy in the last decades, there is nothing inherently wrong with U.S. labor organizations developing a foreign policy. In fact it has become a necessity. (Spalding, 1992: 425)*

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<sup>3</sup> A “transnationalised” production structure refers to the organisation of the production process or production sectors across borders, particularly in the context of regional economic integration. See Bieler, 2005.

A trade union engaging in or even having an interest in the foreign policy process of the state is thought unfavourable in state- and market-centric approaches to international relations currently dominating the field (Bieler, 2005). However, there have been cases where trade unions became an important ally and instrument in fulfilling the foreign policy objectives of a particular state. One of the most studied cases is the role of the American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO) in US foreign policy processes.

The AFL-CIO is a prime example of a trade union developing a strong interest in becoming involved in the foreign policy domain. The AFL-CIO was an important ally in the anti-communist foreign policy of the US by supporting the government's policy to provide military aid to Nicaraguan Contras and the Salvadoran government (Battista, 2002: 421). Furthermore leaders of the AFL-CIO participated in a prominent pro-Contra lobbying group supporting Contra aid (Battista, 2002: 421). However, the AFL-CIO did not have entirely homogeneous policies emanating from its ranks. Spalding (1992: 421) argued that two policies emerged from the US labour movement on the issue of Central America: one advanced by the AFL-CIO top bureaucrats through the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), and the other policy which emerged from the middle level organisations and rank-and-file that represented the interests of all working people of the North and South. As a result, the US labour movement was often divided in their support of American foreign policy, and so too was the membership of the AFL-CIO - often uninformed about their trade union's international activities through the AIFLD (Spalding, 1992: 430). Nevertheless, the AIFLD acted as the main body forging foreign policy in the American labour sector (Spalding, 1992: 424). The AIFLD pursued its foreign policy through four activities: a) training Latin American workers, both in country and in the U.S.; b) supporting union to union programmes; c) lending technical and material assistance to unions in Latin America; and d) undertaking specialised work under USAID contracts (Spalding, 1992: 425). Within the Cold War context, labour was, and still is a powerful force in developing countries and the US government realised then, that to ensure a government favoured by the US government was elected, it would need to get labour organisations on the side of that particular candidate.

Based on the studies done on the AFL-CIO, it becomes apparent that trade unions have had successful campaigns in engaging with the foreign policies and international diplomacy of their governments (Welch, 1995; Sustar, 2005; Van Goethem, 2010; Waters & Daniels, 2010). To further elaborate on trade union support of state foreign policy, Van Goethem

(2010: 663) added that “an accepted incentive for trade unions to engage in international politics is the identification of trade unions with their nation-state so that their international activities are incorporated into the foreign policy of the state to promote state interests”. What Van Goethem (2010) argued about here complies with the trends shown in the studies quoted above. Trade unions that align their foreign policy objectives and international diplomacy activities with those of their government stand a better chance of becoming directly involved in the process and pursuing a successful policy.

Despite the literature denouncing trade unions as a mere instrument used by the government to fulfil its foreign policy objectives, one must not ignore the political identity of trade unions - often an identity that does not depend on the support or alliance from the government. Battista (2002: 427) found in his research that one US trade union, the National Labor Committee (NLC) did not support the foreign policy of the US government towards Central America. The union took it upon itself to educate the American labour movement about the real story behind US foreign policy and how it was impacting workers in Central America by using strategies such as the publication of reports on conditions in Central America, the sponsorship of speaking tours of the US by Salvadoran unionists, congressional lobbying, and finally the mobilisation of popular protest (Battista, 2002: 430). Furthermore, the NLC followed a three-fold strategy: a) cooperation with local labour committees; b) coalitions with non-labour groups; and c) coordination with liberal Democrats in the House of Representatives to maximise its political influence (Battista, 2002: 432). Similarly, the AFL itself opposed US foreign policy by asking for the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq (Sears, 2010: 699). US Labor against the War (USLAW) arranged an Iraqi labour tour to discuss the war and the occupation which, with other strategies undertaken to protest the occupation, culminated in a resolution to withdraw troops from Iraq (Sears, 2010: 716). This was a watershed moment for US labour as the resolution was a product of grassroots action and not a top-down directive (Sears, 2010: 718).

The literature reviewed and cited above underscored interesting points with regard to the part played by trade unions in the foreign policy process. Firstly, trade unions are internationalist by organisational history and nature. The internationalism of production and the interconnectedness among states and the economy requires that trade union organisations pursue international thinking and goals to secure the well-being of their members and the labour movement in its entirety. Secondly, trade union organisations have been bound by their quest for international solidarity among workers of the world and the organisations

which represent them. The quest for international solidarity is but one motivation underlining the international activities of trade union organisations. Thirdly, the following strategies have been identified as common among trade union organisations in their international activities: a) participation in exchanges and engagements with other trade union organisations and other non-state actors; b) the provision of administrative or financial support to other trade union organisations; c) an interest in issues that are categorised in the foreign policy of states, namely, economic relations including trade and economic policy and political issues that include democratic governance, conflict and the protection of human rights.

## **2.5 Concluding remarks**

This chapter has highlighted four points that will serve as the theoretical foundation of this study.

Firstly, that the nature of the international system compels interest groups to be reliant on states for resources and infrastructure. For this reason, states or governments are often the targets of international activities pursued by interest groups.

Secondly, the organisational structure of trade union organisations can have an influence on their behaviour and influence in the policy-making process.

Thirdly, trade unions in the developing world are inherently different from those found in the developed world, and consequently have evolved a different organisational structure to their counterparts in the West. The fact that the former have developed a type social movement unionism contributes to their political role domestically and internationally.

Finally, trade union organisations are international by nature and structure. These attributes have been the foundation of their global activities and the pursuit of universal solidarity among workers worldwide. The pursuit of international solidarity is the foundation on which trade unionism was built, but few trade unions actually pursue an interest in the foreign policy processes of the state.

One limitation of the research cited in this chapter was that most of them are focused on the labour strategies of unions from developed countries, assuming that unions from the developing economies were passive in their engagement with foreign unions. The literature on trade union engagement in the foreign policy of a state is limited to the activities of the AFL-CIO and unions from other developed countries. There is a lack of research done on this particular topic in the context of developing economies, particularly African trade unions.

## **CHAPTER 3: AN OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN ACTORS AND PATTERNS IN SOUTH AFRICA'S FOREIGN POLICY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of South Africa's foreign policy process since 1994 as it is necessary to discuss its context and nature before exploring the role of South African trade unions in what is conceptualised as;

*The continuous process, through which a state plans, develops, implements, negotiates, and evaluates its political and economic relations with other states, as well as its international image, taking into consideration external and internal feedback and influences.*

The first section highlights the core events and patterns that emerged in the foreign policy process of South Africa since 1994. Thereafter, the foreign policy-making process is briefly explained, with particular attention paid to the main role players and actors in the process. The section that follows then looks at the role of interest groups in the foreign policy-making process since 1994. This includes a discussion of the tripartite alliance and its role in the policy-making process.

### **3.2 Core events and patterns**

After the fall of the apartheid regime, the Government of National Unity (GNU) faced a twofold dilemma: a) rebuilding a new national identity and democratic state; and b) to navigate their state through a changing international environment (Schraeder, 2001; Le Pere & Van Nieuwkerk, 2002: 174–175). South Africa had to launch its re-entry into the international community as a democratic state determined to be a law-abiding and willing participant in the building of a peaceful and just international environment. Foreign policy was informed by the personality and leadership of former president Nelson Mandela, whom the international community idolised as an icon and advocate of peace, human rights, equality, and democracy (Schraeder, 2001; Grundy, 2002; Landsberg, 2011; Borer & Mills, 2011). Mandela and his GNU sought to establish South Africa's international and national identity as a beacon of democracy, human rights and freedom (Mandela, 1993; Cooper, 1998: 709–710).

South Africa's foreign policy under the Mandela administration was to be informed by the following principles: a) human rights, extending beyond the political to embrace the economic, social and environmental; b) just and lasting solutions to the problems of humankind through the promotion of democracy; c) respect for justice and international law among nations; d) international peace and international mechanisms to solve conflicts; e) a foreign policy reflecting the interests of Africa; and f) development in South Africa based on growing regional and international economic co-operation (Mandela, 1993). Scholars of South African foreign policy aptly identified the foreign policy style of the Mandela administration as "ethical diplomacy or foreign policy" (Grundy, 2002: 263; Landsberg, 2010a: 96). Conducting and managing diplomatic relations based on ethical and moral principles proved to be a difficult task. South Africa was faced by some tough foreign policy problems early in its international role and foreign policymakers had to balance the national interest of rebuilding an economy in a competitive international environment with the quest to establish its international identity as one that followed ethical diplomacy based on the protection of human rights and freedom (Le Pere & Van Nieuwkerk, 2002: 179; Landsberg, 2010a: 101–104).

The following cases illustrate the difficult compromise between the ethical diplomacy designed by Nelson Mandela and those of South Africa's national interests to finance the country's economic transformation. According to foreign policy scholars, the most pressing dilemma was how to balance the country's foreign policy principles with its national interests and objectives (Schraeder, 2001: 240; Landsberg, 2010a: 103–104). South Africa's handling of the aftermath of a military annulment of the Nigerian presidential elections in 1993, is given as one example of the effects of conflicting foreign policy principles and poor implementation (Johnston, 2001: 11). Nelson Mandela responded to the deteriorating conflict situation with a series of quiet diplomacy initiatives to persuade the military junta's General Sani Abacha not to proceed with the execution of political figures and activists (Landsberg, 2010a: 105). However, when quiet diplomacy failed to stop the executions, Nelson Mandela personally called for the two-year suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth, withdrew the South African High Commissioner from Nigeria and called for sanctions to be placed on the state (Landsberg, 2010a: 105). These hard-line approaches taken by Nelson Mandela were met with staunch criticism from other African states and the international community, accusing South Africa of betraying African solidarity and acting unilaterally (Landsberg, 2010a: 106–107). This was the first foreign policy dilemma in which South Africa had to

compromise between the principles underlying its foreign policy - specifically the principles of protecting human rights and the promotion of democracy – by incorporating internationally-agreed mechanisms to solve conflict and protect the interests of Africa through the spirit of African solidarity.

Not surprisingly, South Africa's struggle to align its foreign policy principles with its economic and political interests continues to compromise its international image. One particular principle that affected the country's international image during the presidency of Nelson Mandela was its belief in the doctrine of universality – pursuing diplomatic relations with all states regardless of their political transgressions (Landsberg, 2010a). The practice of the doctrine caused the country to make contentious decisions regarding its relations with other states. It received international criticism, particularly from the USA, about its relations with rogue states such as Cuba, Iran and Libya (Dlamini, 2004: 3–6; Landsberg, 2010a: 107–108). These states had reputations for supporting terrorist or guerrilla groups and violating international laws and the human rights of their citizens. Yet, despite their records, South Africa engaged in diplomatic relations with these states based in the strong belief in the practice of universality in international relations. Scholars believe that the claim of universality is a ruse to reciprocate support to states that supported the ANC during the liberation struggle, implying an interest in acquiring political and economic favour rather than pursuing these relationships in the hope of influencing or inspiring change (Landsberg, 2010a: 111).

The dilemma of the Two-China problem was another occasion in which South Africa was motivated by economic interests instead of an ethical principle. South Africa faced a decision regarding whether to conduct formal diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC) or to maintain diplomatic links - inherited from the apartheid government - with the Republic of China (ROC) (Bischoff, 1998: 196). Ultimately, the political and economic advantages that would come with recognising the PRC outweighed the potential risk of its non-recognition. However controversial the Two-China policy or the official recognition of the PRC was, Mandela's decision was supported by his party and proved to be a wise decision in terms of South Africa's economic and political objectives (Nel, 1999: 141–142). However, this dilemma shows how much weight the doctrine of universality carries in the diplomatic practices of South Africa, as it contradicts the principles of human rights promoted in state and ANC policy documents.

Some scholars argue that the principles and practice of South Africa's foreign policy are not contradictory (Graham, 2008: 90–91; Landsberg, 2010a: 110–111). Others assert that such a contradiction is not unusual as they are present in the foreign policies of every state (Serrao & Bischoff, 2009). These contradictions and ambiguities in South Africa's foreign policy and diplomacy remained something that its foreign policy administration would have to deal with in the future.

When President Thabo Mbeki took over the reins of South Africa's international relations, his signature on South Africa's foreign policy and the policy-making process had already been established (Spies, 2009: 272), but Thabo Mbeki set in motion a more transformational and developmental administration than his predecessor (Landsberg, 2010a). He centralised the foreign policy process within the Presidency under the International Relations, Peace and Security (IRPS) cluster to produce effective policy and design a foreign policy bureaucracy that was to be geared to achieve the objectives of his proposed foreign policy strategy, namely, economic development and the welfare of the nation (Le Pere & Van Nieuwkerk, 2002: 195). The more realist approach in foreign policy strategy broke away from the idealist and ethical diplomacy developed during the Mandela administration. These key pillars of South Africa's foreign policy, now more defined, would remain constant during President Mbeki's two terms from 1999 until his recall in 2008 (Le Pere & Van Nieuwkerk, 2002: 195, 197). Foreign policy, under Mbeki, departed from the domestic needs and objectives of the state (Landsberg, 2010: 124) and due to the legacy of social inequality left by apartheid, foreign policy was to be informed by the strategies of security and wealth creation (Williams, 2000: 77–78).

During the two administrations of Thabo Mbeki, South Africa's foreign policy became personalised under the president himself as he chose to play a direct role in the international strategies of South Africa and foreign policy became more international and proactive than the reactive, idealistic foreign policy managed by Mandela and his diplomats. However, Mbeki's foreign policy goals continued to implement the policies and strategies and build a foreign policy envisioned by Nelson Mandela and his administration.

In addition, during his first tenure as president of SA, Mbeki sought to fashion policies for Africa and build appropriate institutions to materialise his African vision (Landsberg, 2010a: 151). To be exact, Mbeki's foreign policy administration departed from the tenets of multilateralism, and attempted to forge an equitable international community through the building of relations between the South and the North (Le Pere & Van Nieuwkerk, 2002:

195). It is during this period that South Africa received an impressive accolade from the international community – by literally taking on the role of interlocutor between the developed North and the developing South (Serrao & Bischoff, 2009: 365–367). This very ambitious role inevitably drew criticism that South Africa was punching above its weight in the ranks of the international community; although this has been said to have been the grand objective of President Mbeki (Cooper, 1998: 713–714; Alden & Le Pere, 2004: 294; Serrao & Bischoff, 2009).

Since 1994, South Africa established itself as an active and involved member of the international community. It assumed leadership roles in the United Nations and its member agencies, as well as in the Non-Aligned Movement, the British Commonwealth of Nations, the African Union, and also occupied strategic roles in various economic blocs and groups e.g., BRICS, the G-70 and IBSA (Schraeder, 2001: 234–235; Alden & Le Pere, 2009). South Africa's foreign policy had then entered a phase of a more pragmatic, self-interested approach to diplomacy that emphasised geo-economics (Schraeder, 2001: 238).

Spies (2009: 285) observed that South Africa's foreign policy acquired the character of Thabo Mbeki himself: “driven, assertive, ambitious, elitist and contradictory”. His administration sought to depersonalise foreign policy and set routine guidelines in line with South Africa's domestic objectives of social and economic equality and democracy (Schraeder, 2001: 236). Landsberg (2011: 240) argued that a strong element which arose in foreign policy under Mbeki was the drive to close the gap between what Mbeki described as the two nations and two economies dilemma. South Africa's foreign policy was then to depart from economic objectives geared towards strengthening the South African economy and creating employment (Alden & Soko, 2005; Hentz, 2005; Prys, 2009; Landsberg, 2010a: 124).

This new realist turn in foreign policy strategies can be observed in the handling of the main events faced by foreign policy-makers. Some of these defining events that dominated foreign policy during his administration were the political crisis in Zimbabwe and Burundi, the post-conflict reconstruction of Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Africa's tenure on the UN Security Council.

The political crisis in Zimbabwe posed a great challenge to South Africa. It would come to dominate not only South Africa's foreign policy but also South Africa's domestic politics (Prys, 2009: 193; Soko & Balchin, 2009: 39–40). The political crisis in Zimbabwe erupted

when illegal and violent farm occupations occurred in 2000 (Prys, 2009: 194). Thereafter, human rights abuses by government and the political oppression of opposition parties, trade unions and journalists increased (Prys, 2009: 194). The South African government was prompted to take the lead in forging a peaceful resolution to the Zimbabwean crisis due both to international pressure and the potential of this political crisis to spill over into neighbouring states (Ngubentombi, 2004: 155–156). The policy of quiet diplomacy, spearheaded by President Mbeki himself, was however controversial in South Africa's handling of the Zimbabwe crisis (Landsberg, 2010a: 158). President Mbeki, adamant that persuasion rather than interference or a hard-line stance would solve the political crisis, tried a variety of diplomatic strategies, from negotiations within the SADC leadership to financial assistance in fuel and agriculture (Landsberg, 2010a: 158–159). However, these efforts did not succeed in resolving the crisis and restoring democracy in Zimbabwe. In fact, the situation is still a challenge for the SADC and particularly for South Africa.

This regional crisis then became a domestic issue of contention within the ANC and the general public (Prys, 2009; Serrao & Bischoff, 2009; Landsberg, 2010a). Migration and refugees into South Africa caused domestic tension culminating in xenophobic attacks on immigrants in 2008 (Ngubentombi, 2004: 156). Moreover, civil society launched protests against the policy of quiet diplomacy and advocated for a more assertive stance against President Mugabe (Lipton, 2009: 340). Once more, the principles of African solidarity and protection of human rights and democracy stood in contradiction to South Africa's attempts to navigate the complexities of the Zimbabwean crisis.

South Africa's role in post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa was strengthened and expanded during Mbeki's administration. South Africa considered this project to be an expression of African solidarity and the strengthening of democratic governance and public institutions. Alternatively, an area in which South Africa's foreign policy endured a flood of criticism was during its 2007/2008 tenure on the UN Security Council (UNSC) as a non-permanent member. Scholars have dubbed South Africa's tenure on the UNSC as controversial due to the country's voting behaviour which contradicted many of its stated foreign policy principles of democracy, peace and human rights protection (Graham, 2008; Landsberg, 2010a).

Some scholars believe that it was the international ambitions of Thabo Mbeki that led to his ousting as ANC Chairperson at the ANC National Conference in Polokwane and subsequent recall as president of the country in 2008 (Sidiropoulos, 2008: 111; Spies, 2009: 287).

Kgalema Motlanthe would resume the role of caretaker, pursuing the policies and projects of Thabo Mbeki until Jacob Zuma was elected as the new South African president in 2009.

The election of Jacob Zuma led many to believe that it would initiate change not only in government but also in policy (Sidiropoulos, 2008; Habib, 2009; Spies, 2009; Landsberg, 2011). Indeed, what could be gathered from his maiden speech as the President of South Africa was the allusion to a more cooperative, consultative and open form of governance and leadership (Zuma quoted in Landsberg, 2011: 246). It was also stated that President Zuma's administration would prioritise domestic issues over international and foreign policy issues (Landsberg, 2011; Spies, 2009). In fact, the foreign policy objectives and strategies of South Africa remained the same, building on the foundation laid by Mandela and Mbeki (Landsberg, 2010b: 278). The only change made was the name of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO). Foreign policy would be pursued to achieve and support the national interest of the country, but similar to preceding administrations, Zuma and his foreign policy bureaucracy failed to articulate what those national interests would be (Landsberg, 2010b: 279–280). However, it was clear from statements made by the President and DIRCO that government and all its departments, would be geared to facilitate growth and development in South Africa (Landsberg, 2010a, 2010b; Patel, 2011).

Landsberg (2010a: 200) argued that Zuma straddled the foreign policy administrations of his predecessors, combining Mandela's ethical diplomacy with Mbeki's commitment to development and the South. However, what is slightly different in the Zuma administration is a stronger presence of commercial, utilitarian, and diplomatic motivations for profit (Landsberg, 2010a: 200, 218). The core foreign policy events that occurred so far in the tenure of President Zuma illustrate this argument.

South Africa's growing economic and political relationship with the PRC was one foreign policy issue that captured the attention of the public (Patel, 2011). The Zuma government set out to strengthen the relationship between China and South Africa both for its political and economic advantages (Landsberg, 2010a: 237). This strategic relationship became a topic of heated debate when the South African government delayed processing the Dalai Lama's visa (Patel, 2011). The public and civil society organisations attributed this delay to political pressure from China, arguing that South Africa was compromising its values of human rights

and political freedom for economic and political gain (San Suu Kyi, Cosatu join visa outcry, 2011).<sup>4</sup>

Another pressing issue on the foreign policy agenda during Zuma's presidency was that of Swaziland's political regime. The dictatorship in Swaziland has been a regional and international cause for concern in South Africa since 1996 (Ngubentombi, 2004: 149). However, it became an issue of domestic concern during the Zuma administration when trade unions and members of South African civil society expressed their disappointment with the government's silence on the anti-democratic actions taken by the Swazi monarchy (Motsamai, 2011).<sup>5</sup>

A highlight for the Zuma government was when the country obtained another term in the UNSC. This time around, South Africa has taken a more assertive approach in following the principles of human rights, peace and multilateralism (Patel, 2011). It has also acted with greater independence than it did in its previous tenure on the UNSC (Patel, 2011). However, the government still struggles with the ambiguity of its foreign policy principles and practices.

### **3.3 Foreign policy process and role players**

This section describes the foreign policy process of South Africa, paying particular attention to the trends in policy as well as the most important role players in the process. It has been structured by highlighting the different actors involved in the foreign policy-making process in the presidential administrations of Nelson Mandela (1994-1999), Thabo Mbeki (1999-2008), and the first three years of President Jacob Zuma's administration (2009-2012).

#### **3.3.1 The Mandela years: 1994-1999**

The Mandela administration faced a difficult challenge in restructuring South Africa's foreign policy process as it had to contend with the challenge of restructuring old decision-making styles of the apartheid era. In addition, the apartheid era diplomats and foreign services corps had to be integrated into the style and foreign policy culture of the ANC and

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<sup>4</sup> The Dalai Lama has been living in exile in India since fleeing Tibet during a failed uprising in 1959 against Chinese occupation of Tibet (Government under siege for "weakness" on Dalai Lama, 2011). Beijing accuses him of being a "splittist" and discourages his meetings with foreign government leaders (Government under siege for "weakness" on Dalai Lama, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Swaziland currently has a monarchical regime that is repressive of the rights of civil freedom and political participation of its citizens. Swazi trade unions and other civil society organisations have launched protests to call on the democratisation of Swaziland. These protests have been met by repressive and aggressive action from the government (Motsamai, 2011).

other liberation movements (Landsberg, 2011: 236; Le Pere & Van Nieuwkerk, 2002: 176). The foreign policy process was overshadowed by the personality and international stature of Nelson Mandela. Le Pere and Van Nieuwkerk (2006: 285–286) observed that South Africa's foreign policy was largely equated with President Mandela which resulted in a process whereby policy often followed his public statements rather than the other way around. Consequently, the foreign policy-making process of South Africa was dominated by the vision and directives of the chief executive and his closest advisors.

The dominance of the president stood in awkward contrast to the role of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), which in theory, was tasked with the formulation and execution of foreign policy (Department of Foreign Affairs, 1996). In reality, the DFA was gradually reduced to overseeing and implementing foreign policy. As a result of the loss of the DFA's powers and responsibilities, the Department of Trade and Industry asserted itself over economic foreign policy processes such as negotiations with the European Union over trade and development (Le Pere & Van Nieuwkerk, 2002: 176; Landsberg, 2011: 238). Consequently, the DFA remained a relatively weak institution in the process of foreign policy-making throughout the Mandela administration and beyond, its powers reduced to mere foreign policy management and implementation.

Another strong role player in the foreign policy process was Thabo Mbeki, the dominant figure in foreign policy management and policy-making during the Mandela administration (Gevisser, 2007: 658–659). With Mbeki's commanding role in the institutional mechanics of foreign, domestic and economic policy (Landsberg, 2011: 239), there was tense competition between the different centres of foreign policy decision-making which included the president and deputy-president's office, government departments as well as competition between the old order and new order of foreign policy bureaucrats (Le Pere and Van Nieuwkerk, 2002: 177). The result of this was the marginalisation of parliament and civil society; the bastions of democracy.

Parliament is tasked with representing the people by providing a national forum for public consideration of issues, by passing legislation and by scrutinising and overseeing executive action (Le Pere & Van Nieuwkerk, 2002: 190; Ahmed, 2009: 291). Accordingly, the role of parliament in the foreign policy process is to ratify treaties and evaluate draft policy documents, done mainly by the portfolio committee on foreign affairs (Le Pere & Van Nieuwkerk, 2002: 191). In spite of this important role in representing the views of the public in the foreign policy process, parliament now rarely plays an active role in evaluating and

reviewing the foreign policy decisions of government (Ahmed, 2009). The role of parliament, in reality, has been reduced to that of a rubber-stamp, rarely debating foreign policy issues or even making the foreign policy process accessible to public scrutiny (Ahmed, 2009).

In contrast, civil society - although playing a marginalised role in the process - has become the public watchdog in the realm of foreign policy decision-making and implementation (Le Pere & Van Nieuwkerk, 2002: 194). Scholars are divided as to whether civil society has any influence in the foreign policy-making process, but few studies have been conducted on this role of civil society.

### **3.3.2 The Mbeki years: 1999-2008**

The challenges and structure of the foreign policy process continued into the Mbeki administration. The foreign policy process in the Mbeki era was characterised by a shift from ethical diplomacy and foreign policy implemented on the basis of Mandela's international reputation, to one that was depersonalised, centralised and coordinated to serve the country's domestic objectives, namely, security and wealth creation (Le Pere & Van Nieuwkerk, 2002: 195).

Landsberg (2011: 240) has argued that Mbeki's style of foreign policy decision-making could be likened to the royal court model of foreign policy decision-making. This particular style of leadership and decision-making is characterised by a highly centralised, monarchical decision-making process, typically dominated by the head of state and/or his key advisors (Geldenhuys, 1984: 238). Furthermore, Mbeki pursued the rational model of foreign policy-making – which conceives foreign policy as actions chosen by the national government to maximise its strategic goals and objectives (Landsberg, 2011: 241). His Two Nations-Speech alluded to the emphasis that would be placed on economic foreign policy and the development of Africa and the Global South (Le Pere & Van Nieuwkerk, 2002: 195).

To coordinate domestic and foreign policies, Mbeki established a collective/cluster approach to decision-making (Gumede, 2011: 174–175). The foreign policy domain was to be formulated by the International Relations, Peace and Security (IRPS) cluster – made up of 19 departments and agencies of which six would be core agencies and co-chaired by the Department of Defence and the DFA (Gumede, 2011: 174–175; Landsberg, 2011: 242).

The foreign policy process during the Mbeki years, therefore, became recognised as a new integrated government and policy process instead of being characterised by the muddle-through style of foreign policy implemented by the Mandela administration (Landsberg,

2011: 242; Mathebe, 2012: 255). Continuity was provided by the executive role players in the foreign policy process during the Mbeki years as this president established various sub-actors that would ensure his direct involvement in the policy process and its implementation (Le Pere & Van Nieuwkerk, 2006: 289–290).

The DFA, therefore, still featured prominently in the management and implementation of South Africa's foreign policy. Its mandate under the Mbeki administration included: a) supporting the cabinet and the ministerial responsibilities of the minister; b) monitoring and analysis of the international environment; communicating government policy; c) developing policy options, mechanisms and avenues; d) protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic; and e) assisting citizens abroad as well as sister departments in their international roles (Landsberg, 2011: 243).

The role of the cabinet was also enhanced during the Mbeki years, owing to his belief in a collective approach to government. "It became the highest governance structure and would exercise oversight over all foreign policy including the coherence and coordination of foreign policy" (Landsberg, 2011: 243). The Presidential Coordinating Council (PCC) and National Ministers and Provincial Members of Executive Committees (MinMecs) were established as additional instruments to ensure the coordination of national development priorities and cooperation among government agencies (Landsberg, 2011: 244). The Forum of South African Director-Generals (FOSAD) would comprise the most senior government officials in each government department and would coordinate the work and inputs of the director-generals (The Presidency, 2008: 7). This agency was created to coordinate the government's cluster process.

An important agency in Mbeki's policy network was the Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Services (PCAS) with its main responsibilities in the areas of policy initiation, planning, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation (The Presidency, 2008: 49). Another agency created for policy influence and coordination was the Advisor's Forum. It consisted of advisors for political principles, parliamentary councillors and senior staff of the Presidency (Landsberg, 2011: 245).

What can be observed from the Mandela and Mbeki administrations and the foreign policy process of that time, was the increasing power of the President in the foreign policy-making process and the subsequent marginalisation of institutions and agencies established to facilitate democratic decision-making and public scrutiny in the foreign policy process. Furthermore, South Africa's foreign policy process became more centralised and decision-making was informed by strategic and rational analysis, devised to assist in the domestic goals of the country.

### **3.3.3 The current Zuma administration: 2009-2012**

The marginalisation of the public and certain interest groups from the process and the centralisation of policy-making led to the recall of President Mbeki. It was therefore important for the Zuma administration to distinguish its policy-making style from that of its predecessor. President Zuma declared during his presidency that the government would be “open and consultative”, and more responsive, caring and interactive (Rossouw & Letsoalo, 2009). Moreover, in a shift from the styles of Mandela and Mbeki, President Zuma prioritised domestic issues over foreign policy (Kondlo, 2010: 1). Despite the claims that Zuma would bring a new managerial style and fresh perspective to the foreign policy process, it later becomes apparent that nothing much had changed except the staff and name of the department.

The principles and strategies pursued in the previous democratic administrations, were seen to have been adopted by the Zuma government but with a greater emphasis on pursuing the national interest and making the foreign policy process more accessible to the public (Spies, 2009; Landsberg, 2010a, 2010b; Patel, 2011). However, as can be observed from the current role players within the foreign policy process, President Zuma's foreign policy was to be controlled and managed by a close group of departments, officials and government agencies, and would not be as open and interactive as he claimed it would be.

The Presidency remained the most powerful influence and decision-maker in South Africa's foreign policy process; however, President Zuma chose to surround himself with foreign policy advisors, which is where the real decision-making takes place (Landsberg, 2011: 247). The power of the Presidency in the South African policy-making process has therefore not diminished but has been entrenched and fortified by the increased power of policy advisors within the process.

President Zuma's group of advisors, includes prominent individuals like Lindiwe Zulu; former Minister of Trade and Industry, Mandisi Mpahlwa; former Minister of Safety and Security, Charles Nqakula; Welile Nhlapo, who served as UN special envoy to Burundi and the Great Lakes; finally Mac Maharaj and Jesse Duarte are also part of the advisors forum – thereby representing Zuma's closest confidants as well as experienced diplomats and ambassadors (Landsberg, 2011: 247–248).

This coterie of advisors has considerable influence in the role of the Cabinet. During the Mbeki years, a commitment to collective decision-making necessitated the dominant role of the Cabinet. So too did Zuma state his commitment to collective decision-making in the policy-making process; however, the Advisors Forum have the power to initiate foreign policy issues before they get to the Cabinet for approval (Landsberg, 2011: 248).

President Zuma launched the National Planning Commission (NPC) as a new institution to coordinate policy-making in pursuit of the twin goals of growth and development. The NPC focused on the foreign policy aim of “rapid economic growth” (The Presidency, 2012). An important actor that arose from the “palace coup” launched at the Polokwane Conference was the ANC's International Relations Rapid Response Task Team. Therefore, according to Landsberg (2011: 250) the ANC, as the ruling party, has restored its power in national policy-making through the leadership of President Zuma.

Finally, in the spirit of democratic consultation and “bringing the power back to the people”, the Zuma government set out include non-state actors in the foreign policy process. DIRCO launched a series of civil society engagements, convening meetings with leaders of foreign policy think tanks, and other civil society formations (Landsberg, 2011: 251). However, despite government reaching out to civil society on matters of foreign policy, non-state actors remain marginalized in the policy process. Landsberg (2011: 251) has argued that it is civil society that remains ambivalent about engaging with government on foreign policy, attributing the ambivalence to civil society's obsession with independence and fear of being co-opted.

So far, one can observe a foreign policy model within the Zuma administration that imitated the network of close advisors at the core of the process with the Presidency still controlling the process. Government and the policy-making process has indeed become more centralised in an attempt to coordinate national and international transactions and policy. Moreover, the foreign policy-making process remains elitist and closed off to public scrutiny and engagement.

### **3.4 The status of interest groups**

The trend throughout South Africa's foreign policy-making process after apartheid was the marginalisation of interest groups and civil society. Many scholars, both in the fields of South African foreign policy and foreign policy analysis agree that interest groups, civil society and the public play a limited, if not non-existent role in the foreign policy process (Landsberg, 2011). However, some studies that have been done on the role of interest groups in South Africa's foreign policy process indicate that these groups can facilitate the democratisation of the process and even support the foreign policy process implemented by government.

Hudson (2010), in her critique of the participation, or lack thereof, of various local foreign policy actors, evaluated the roles and position of these interest groups within the foreign policy process. She found that South African foreign policy remains elitist and inaccessible to civil society and public scrutiny (Hudson, 2010: 122). Hudson (2010) reviewed the following role players in SA foreign policy: parliament, the presidency, the political party and civil society (in which two case studies were observed: the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) and labour movements in SA). Her study showed that the political party, particularly the ANC, had gained greater influence in the foreign policy process of South Africa since 1994 (Hudson, 2010: 116–117).

Alternatively, according to Hudson, (2010: 121), another group that has retained some measure of advocacy in foreign policy issues was the South African labour movement, most notably represented by COSATU. While warning that COSATU's influence in the foreign policy process should not be overestimated, she asserts that the labour organisation has managed to represent the views of the public on certain foreign policy processes and it was able to generate public debate on these issues (Hudson, 2010: 121). However, their ability to influence the policy-making process is an issue that will be discussed later.

Another interest group active in the foreign policy process of South Africa has been the South African Dialogue for Women (SAWID) which used their soft power as a gender-based

interest group to facilitate democratic values in Burundi (April, 2009). April (2009: 139) based her study on the belief that the 21<sup>st</sup> century had afforded interest groups an opportunity to use globalisation techniques and organisational objectives to promote good governance. Her argument was that South Africa cannot achieve its foreign policy objectives by itself and she advocated civic interest groups as a strategic tool for implementing soft power (April, 2009: 125).

Another domestic interest group that has used its advocacy in both the domestic and international environment is the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC). The TAC had participated in high-profile legal battles with international pharmaceutical company Pfizer over the costs of its medications as well as a legal battle forcing government to distribute anti-retroviral treatment to people living with HIV or AIDS (Hudson, 2010: 119). According to Hudson (2010: 119) the TAC's success was attributed to the fact that it used a combination of conflict and cooperation in its relationship with government to bring about reform and induce "globalisation from below."

In contrast to this argument, interest groups have also played a role in limiting the decision-making of government. This can be observed in the role of trade unions, particularly the most vocal, COSATU, in the international trade decisions of the South African government. Owing to the social and economic challenges inherited from the country's past, trade unions have often pressured government to take a mercantilist stance in dealing with international trade with other countries (Alden & Soko, 2005: 378). Furthermore, trade unions have played a role in advocating for a return to ethical foreign policy and diplomacy in the handling of South Africa's international relations.

The general assumption is that the real power in South Africa's policy-making process lies within the Tripartite Alliance. The Tripartite Alliance is a formal alliance between the ANC, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and COSATU as a political formation set to influence policy-making and keep policy aligned with socialist ideology and objectives (African National Congress, 2012). The Alliance, therefore, was to be a strategic instrument through which the governing party and its allies played a formative role in the policy-making process.

Since its establishment, the power of the Alliance has, however, been overstated considering the internal political fractures and disunity within its ranks (Lodge, 1999: 6). The resentment between the ANC and its alliance partners was apparent during the post-apartheid

negotiations when COSATU criticised the ANC for conceding to the former administration and not consulting them during the political and economic negotiations (Lodge, 1999: 8). Nevertheless, a constructive policy that emerged from the Alliance was the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) adopted in 1994. The RDP proposed the alleviation of poverty and the reconstruction of the economy (Lodge, 1999: 10; Kondlo, 2010: 18). The RDP was based on socialist ideology and sought to restructure society and most importantly, the economy, to build an equal, non-racial society that was intended to facilitate growth through development. Moreover, the foreign policy of South Africa also was to be based on RDP principles calling for foreign investors to be treated equally with national investors and was to ensure that foreign investment created employment and facilitated knowledge transferral (Lodge, 1999: 11).

A rupture in the Alliance occurred when the government adopted the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy. GEAR focused on inflation-targeting and de-regulation that would allow international capital ease of access into South African markets (Misra, 2009: 186). The neoliberal shift in the ANC's economic policy created tension between the ruling party and its partners that would leave the strength and unity of the Alliance on shaky ground. Some scholars maintain that the Tripartite Alliance's influence in policy-making and decision-making has declined since the democratic transition and after the new democratic government found its feet as state leaders (Lodge, 1999; Misra, 2009). In response to this decline, the trade union members of the Tripartite Alliance have taken on a new role: they have acted as watchdogs and as political pressure groups against the government (Hudson, 2010: 120–121). COSATU is the most critical of all the members of the Alliance. To date, the trade union has been vocal about a range of issues that affect its support-base but which were not limited only to its membership. The trade union's alliance with the governing party has bestowed upon them both a larger constituency and support base, giving it a mass party-trade union identity, able to reach citizens beyond party or union membership. Therefore, although it can be observed that the role of COSATU in the policy-making process of South Africa has declined, the trade union has raised its voice over range of issues from South Africa's economic diplomacy to the freedom of expression in the country's arts and culture. This critical stance, often taken by COSATU, has caused tension between the alliance partners

### **3.5 Concluding remarks**

South Africa's foreign policy process is one marked by ambiguity and contradiction. The democratic transition took place in a context of international change and the dawning of a new neoliberal era of economic policy-making and diplomacy. The ANC had to balance its domestic objectives of redistribution and development with that of engaging economic relations in a competitive global economic environment. Yet another challenge was balancing and juggling the difficult decisions made between ethical principles and hard-line economic prosperity for its people.

Also, the executive branch of government was given the responsibility and the sole domain of foreign policy-making process and related decision-making. Other role players within the process became instruments through which the president and his closest allies could strengthen coordination and control over the process, leaving the actors marginalised, who could play a role in democratic forces, and reduced to tools of implementation and execution. This led to the marginalisation of interest groups, parliament and the public from participating in the decision-making and policy-making processes

This does not imply that interest groups do not play a role in foreign policy process in its entirety. In fact, like the trade unions, a particular role that has been adopted by interest groups in South Africa is that of public watchdog or critic – advocating policy issues and making the public aware of South Africa's role in the international community. Interest groups, in fact, provide a link between the citizen and the government. Of these groups, whose critical stance against government has grown, are the trade unions.

Trade unions in South Africa, in fact, are in a strategic position, whether aligned to the governing party or independent from such political influence. Their strategic role is attributed to the history of trade unions and their significant role in the political economy of South Africa. Furthermore, trade unions represent a powerful societal force in any developing country – the working classes. The next chapter will delve into an analysis and empirical exploration of the role of trade unions in South Africa's foreign policy processes.

## CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

The role of trade union organisations in a country's foreign policy processes is an understudied topic, particularly with regard to countries in the developing world. It is generally accepted within academic circles that the process remains a largely state-centred domain. It is also generally accepted that trade unions within the developing world are concerned with domestic political and economic challenges and events, and they rarely venture into the realm of foreign policy.

In the case of South Africa, trade unions have engaged in issues that are considered beyond their organisational roles as worker organisations. However, recent trade union statements and advocacy of issues categorised as part of the foreign policy agenda of the state have been a prime motivation for this particular study. Certainly, South Africa's role in the international community has become an issue of interest among domestic trade unions for reasons that have yet to be discovered. Therefore this chapter will discuss the findings from the data collected for this study which show what issues in foreign policy motivate the involvement of SA trade union organisations.

#### 4.1.1 Thematic coding and analysis

Codes were created to explore the themes and relationships that would emerge from the data collected. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 (see section 4.1.1.1 below) display the codes allocated to articles that dealt with issues relating to the foreign policy agenda of the government and activities of trade unions' solidarity respectively. These themes were constructed based on data-driven coding and the theoretical background provided by reviewed literature on the topic of trade unions and their international role and activities. For a complete description and list of the codes below, see Appendix A.

##### *4.1.1.1 Foreign policy agenda of the state*

The foreign policy agenda of the state was derived from theory emanating from the literature review as well as a method of data-driven coding. This theme was further divided into two separate sub-themes, namely economic foreign policy and that of a political nature.

Firstly, economic foreign policy issues concern those relating to a state's economic relations and power in the international system. However, it is becoming difficult to draw the line

between international economic issues and domestic economic issues as the two are inter-related and one would have a bearing on the other (Bayne & Woolcock, 2003: 7). Further, economic interdependence has blurred the distinction between international and domestic economic concerns. This is illustrated by the effects of economic downturns or crises in one state spilling over to another with negative economic consequences. The debt crisis (1980s) and global financial crisis (2000s) are but two examples of how economic interdependence has virtually diminished the economic borders of a state (Bayne & Woolcock, 2003: 7).

Within this first theme, four sub-categories that have a bearing on the role of trade unions were extracted by using the method of data-driven coding. These categories are illustrated in Table 4.1 below as: macro-economic policy issues, investment, trade, and aid issues. A separate fifth category called “other” was created to include factors and issues outside of the four main themes identified during the coding process.

The political issues within the foreign policy process were identified as the second major theme within the literature review. These are issues that have a place on the foreign policy agenda by virtue of the potential impact or consequence they may have on the international political system. The list of codes identified during data-driven coding are displayed in Table 4.1 below. They include a) democratic governance which refers to the spread and promotion of democracy as legitimate form of government; b) the protection of human rights; c) conflict and warfare; d) the international system and international organisations, and finally e) a code created to include issues outside the four main political themes, yet which still have a potential to impact the international political system.

**Table 4.1: Thematic codes for issues commonly addressed in foreign policy process**

<u>Economic issues</u>		<u>Political Issues</u>
<i>Macro-economic policy</i>	Exchange controls	Democracy
	Employment	Human Rights
	Prices	Conflict
<i>Investment</i>	International capital	International system
	Mergers	Other
	Domestic capital	
<i>Trade</i>	Bilateral	
	Multilateral	
<i>Aid</i>	Development aid	
	Loans	
<i>Other</i>		

**4.1.1.2 International solidarity**

The third overarching theme that resonated with the literature review was about the international activities in which trade unions were engaged. All were motivated by a need to establish a relationship and a sense of solidarity with other trade unions across national borders. This incorporates a) activities that include symbolic forms of establishing international solidarity such as international exchanges and formal engagements between trade union organisations, and b) more tangible forms of support such as media statements and financial support provided by trade union organisations towards their international counterparts.

The codes used to analyse trade union engagement in international solidarity activities are displayed in Table 4.2 below. Trade union exchanges and engagements describe the abstract and symbolic exchanges and meetings that foster international trade union solidarity. This includes meetings, summits and conferences arranged by international organisations and forums, as well as those arranged bilaterally or multilaterally among trade union

organisations. This particular category also includes the exchange of labour attachés and country tours for foreign trade unionists. The second category includes joint activities that have been launched between trade union organisations and other civil society or interest groups. These are activities that are directed towards activism for or against an issue, to resolve an issue or to advocate a particular message ranging from matters of economic, political and social concern.

The categories of support activities identified as methods of establishing international solidarity between trade unions organisations are as follows:

- The advocacy and public awareness channelled through the media with trade unions organisations abroad.
- Financial aid or assistance given by a trade union to aid the activities of another trade union.
- Administrative support to another trade union includes the provision of administrative assistance, offices, and personnel.
- Training to strengthen the organisational management of trade unions and also educational exchanges between unions.
- The category of “other” includes activities that cannot be coded within the previous four categories.

**Table 4.2: Thematic codes for activities of international solidarity between trade union organisations**

<u><i>Trade union engagements and exchanges</i></u>	<u><i>Trade Union support</i></u>
<b>Meetings</b>	<b>1. Media</b>
<b>Joint activities</b>	<b>2. Financial</b>
	<b>3. Administrative</b>
	<b>4. Training</b>
	<b>5. Other</b>

#### 4.1.1.3 Methods of advocacy

Direct action is a category attributed to the various actions that trade union organisations take to make their demands heard in the policy-making process of a government. For the purpose of this study, the most common forms of trade union activism and direct action were identified and coded accordingly. Table 4.3 below displays the form of action and its code used to analyse the data sample of online news articles. The category of other was used to represent direct forms of action that are not commonly used by trade union organisations but that were apparent in a particular data sample.

**Table 4.3: Methods of action used by trade union organisations**

<u>Direct Action</u>		<u>Code</u>
<b>Policy influence</b>		<b>Policy</b>
<b>Protest action</b>		<b>Protest</b>
<b>Public statements</b>		<b>Statement</b>
<b>Other</b>		<b>Other</b>

The codes and themes displayed in Tables 4.1 to 4.3 above were used to analyse the data sample collected during research. Each article within the data sample was coded according to the prevalence of these themes within the data sample. Quantitative analysis of the frequency of these codes within the data sample indicates the prevalence of one theme or form of direct action over another. Alternatively, qualitative analysis of these themes was conducted to explore the motivations for the interest in foreign policy among South African trade union organisations.

## 4.2 Frequency of foreign policy themes found in the data sample

The section below presents the findings that resulted from quantitative analysis of the data sample collected from media websites. It shows the frequency of key themes found in the data sample. The first step in analysing which foreign policy issues have received the greatest interest from trade unions was to count the frequency of themes between 1999 and 2012 within a data sample. The total sample of media articles used in data analysis was 127 articles (n=127). The frequency of occurrences is illustrated in the thematic table below. Each theme (as displayed in Tables 4.1 to 4.3) appears within the total data sample of n=127. The number

of occurrences, in total, outnumbered the sample of articles used in this study because many articles contained more than one or two themes.

**Table 4.4: Number of occurrences of each theme within data sample**

Theme	Frequency of occurrence within data sample of N=127
Macro-economic policy	37
Investment	25
Trade relations	16
Aid and other	17
Political	90
Trade union support	3
Trade Union exchange and engagements	23
Direct action	125
<b>Total number of themes within data sample of 127 articles (n=127)</b>	<b>335</b>

#### 4.2.1 Macro-economic policy issues

Macro-economic policy refers to the branch of economics that deals with large-scale economics such as prices, interest rates, employment, and exchange controls. The three codes extracted from data-driven coding were:

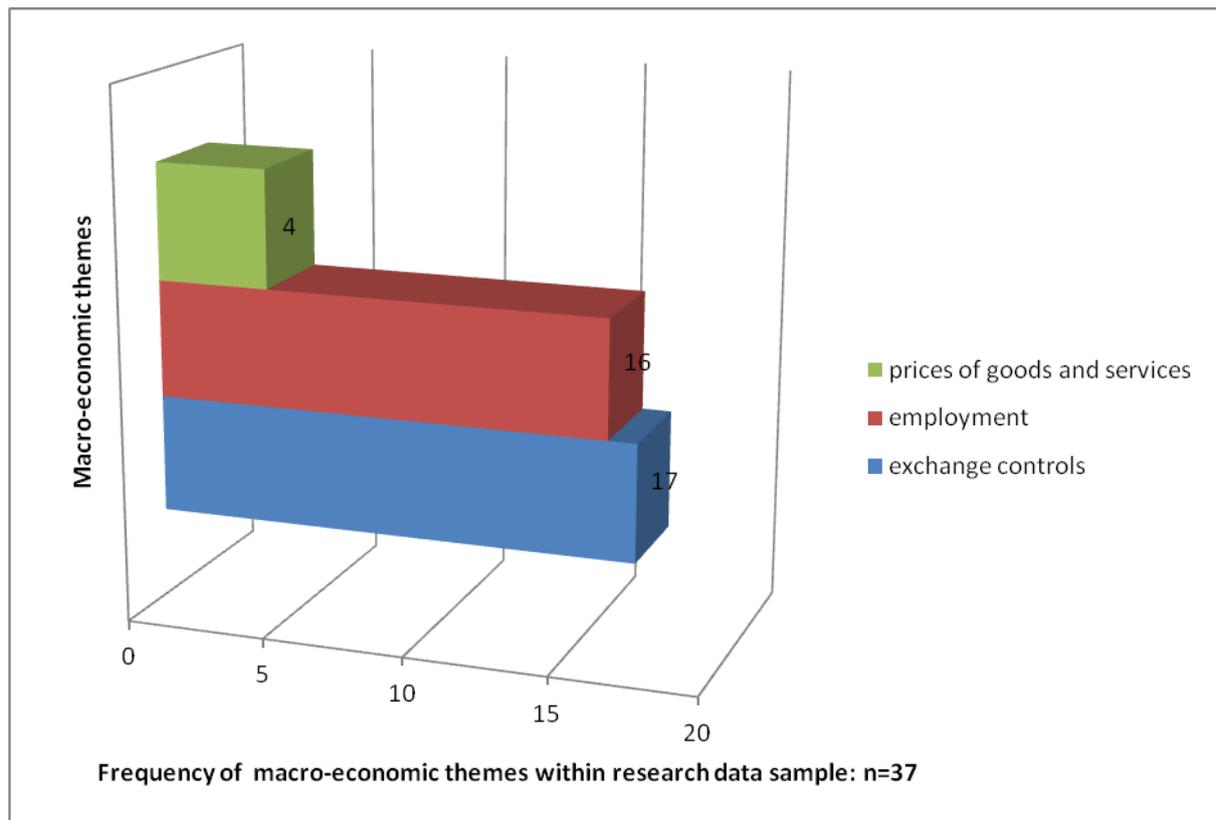
1. exchange controls, which refer to interest rates, inflation and foreign exchange rates;
2. employment which concerns the creation of (decent) employment and skills training; and finally
3. the prices of basic goods and services and the control thereof.

Figure 4.1 below displays the findings produced by the coding process. The number of articles pertaining to macro-economic policy issues totalled 37 articles out of the data sample of 127. Between 1999 until 2012, trade union organisations placed a premium on the issues of exchange controls, which included interest rates, inflation-targeting and foreign exchange

rates. Issues relating to employment creation, decent work and skills development came a close second to exchange controls, while issues relating to the prices of goods and services showed a low prevalence within the data sample.

From an analytical point of view, the results signify that trade unions participated in advocating: a) lowered interest rates, b) a shift towards a more employment-targeted economic policy, and c) the stability of domestic currency to increase South African exports and decrease the influx of portfolio investments. From an organisational standpoint, the data reflected the trade unions' objectives as a) championing the protection of the rights and livelihoods of salaried workers, b) focusing on issues like macro-economic policy and employment as crucial to the stability of the South African economy and salaried workers. For this reason, trade unions not only advocate a macro-economic policy that protects domestic industry and workers, but also that the policy is devised to discourage short-term speculative international capital. Furthermore, the data showed that South African trade unions saw the domestic increase in the unemployment rate as part of a global unemployment crisis. This explains their active involvement in advocating that all governments take a proactive stance on finding solutions to growing unemployment.

The results produced during quantitative content analysis support the arguments made by Millen (1963), Breitenfellner (1997) and Munck (2002) that trade unions have an implicit interest in the economic decisions of government or national business industries based on their mission to protect the economic interests and employment security of their members.

**Figure 4.1: Frequency of macro-economic themes**

#### 4.2.2 Investment issues

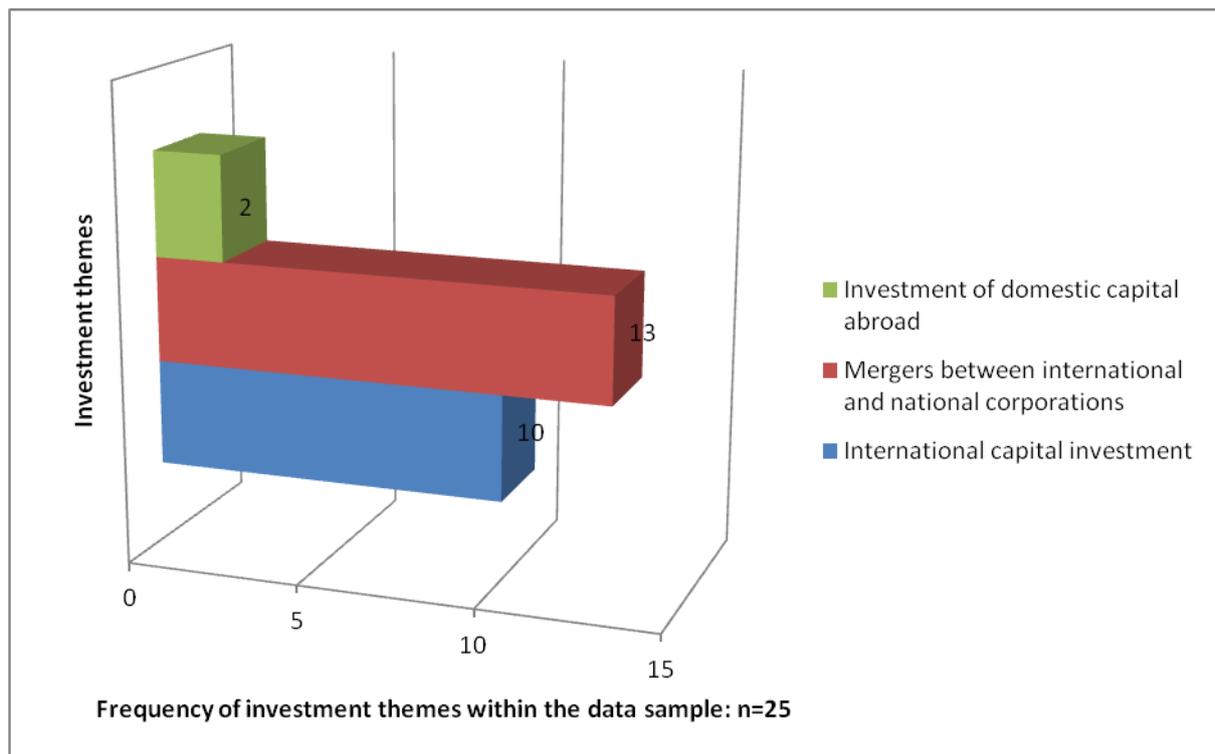
Investment pertains to the investment of capital and equipment internationally or within national borders. The total number of articles that are relevant to investment issues amounted to 25 out of the total sample of 127 articles (n=127). This category was extracted from data-driven coding (see Figure 4.2 below) and includes the following codes as prominent issues:

1. Investment of international capital. This code refers to foreign capital and equipment invested in the domestic economy.
2. Mergers between international and national corporations. This code refers to capital investment and foreign direct investment in domestic companies with the goal of owning a share in that company.
3. The third code refers to the investment of domestic capital abroad.

The results of the coding process displayed in Figure 4.2 below show that mergers between international and domestic companies received the greatest attention among SA trade union organisations while the investment of international capital came a close second. The third code, the investment of domestic capital in foreign economies and companies was not shown

to be of great concern to South African trade unions. The greatest concern about mergers between international and domestic corporations was the threat of retrenchments and the ultimate rise in unemployment. The issue which SA trade union organisations showed their greatest disapproval concerned international foreign investment from countries with a questionable human rights record, for example, investment received from the People's Republic of China (PRC).

**Figure 4.2: Frequency of investment themes**



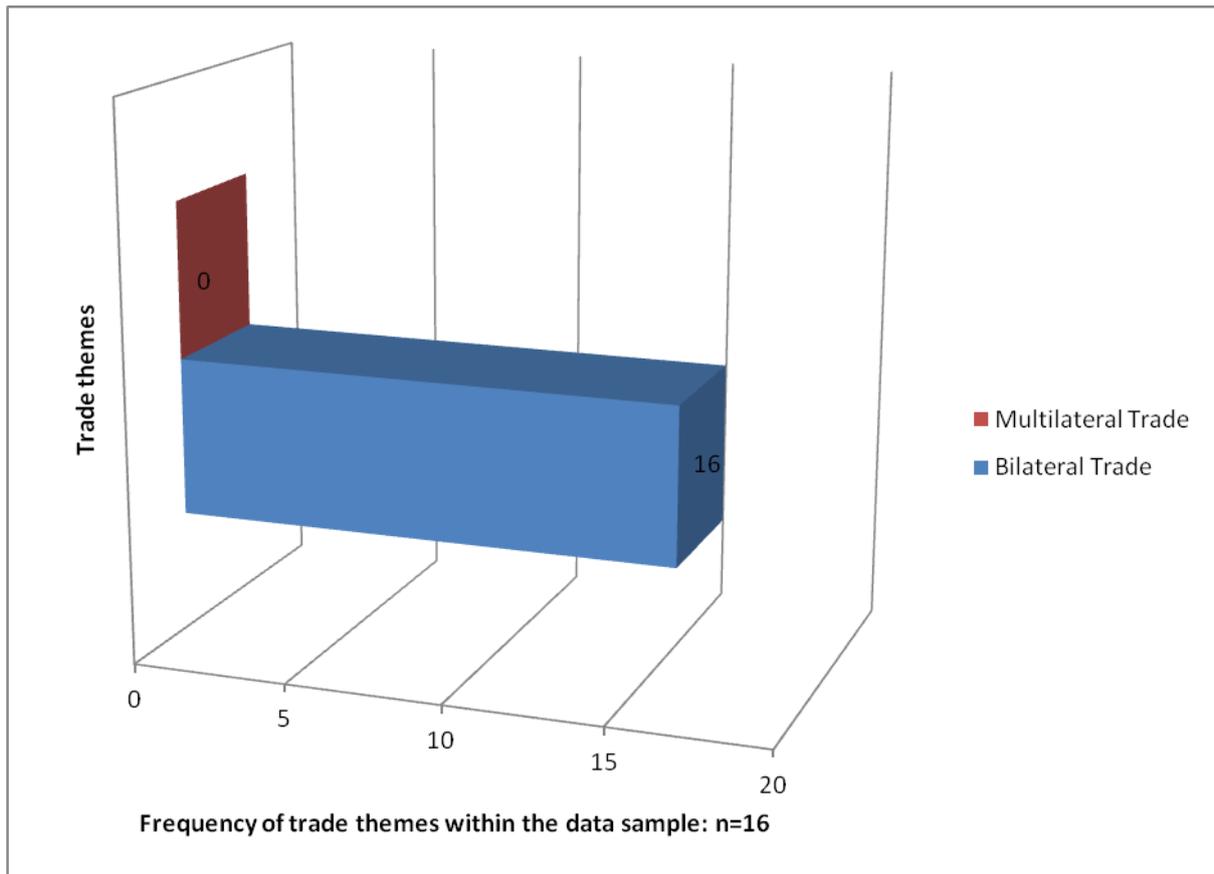
### 4.2.3 Trade issues

Trade refers to international trade relations between countries and is represented by two codes: bilateral trade and multilateral trade. Bilateral trade concerns trade between two countries namely South Africa and another state. Multilateral trade refers to trade and economic relations between more than two countries, thereby relating to South Africa's role in regional and international trade blocs and organisations.

Figure 4.3 below displays the results gathered in the coding process for trade issues. Their frequency was addressed in 16 articles out of a total data sample of 127. Bilateral trade's prevalence in the data sample was far greater than multilateral trade. The trade unions were also more concerned about South Africa's bilateral trade relations with the PRC and Israel than any other states. This was based on three factors: a) the violation of human rights and

freedom; b) the effect that trading with these countries has on job opportunities and security in SA; and c) the effect that trade has on the international image of SA. It is interesting to note that none of the articles within the data sample featured any trade union engagement or statements on multilateral trade relations, particularly news on South Africa's economic relations with the South African Development Community (SADC).

**Figure 4.3: Frequency of trade themes**



#### 4.2.4 Aid and “other” themes

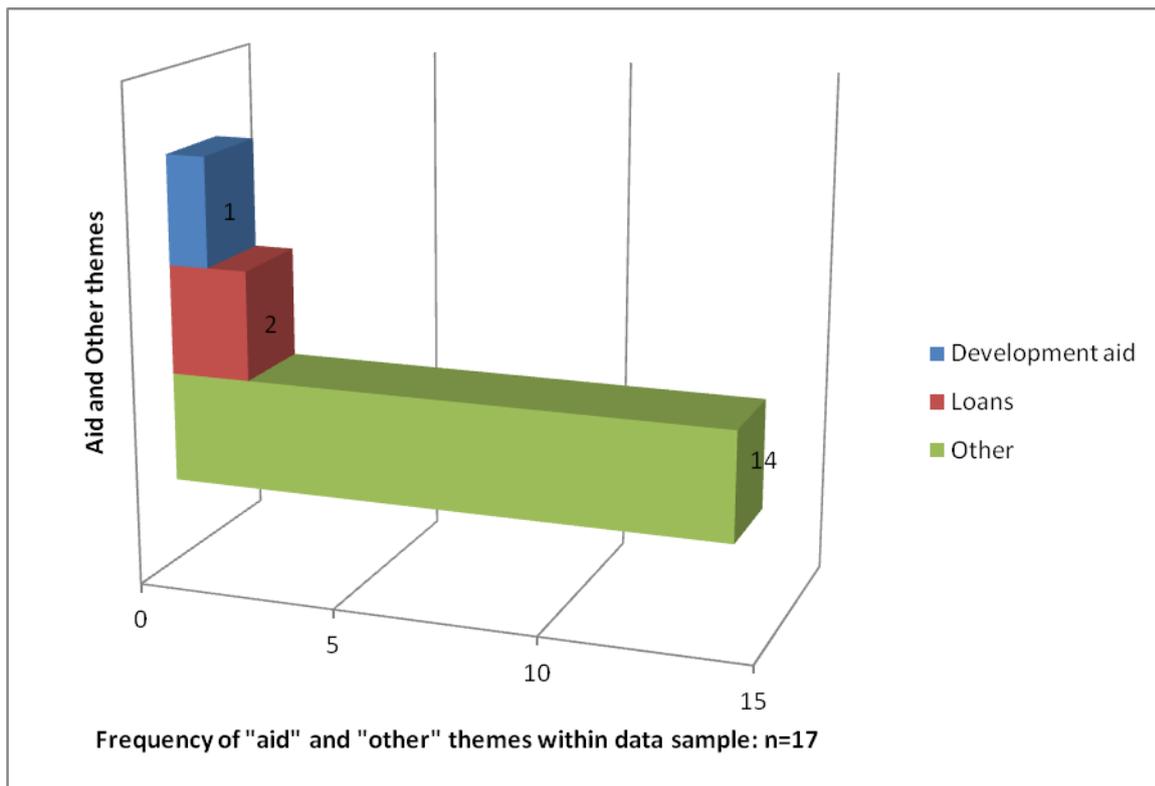
This section presents results from the remaining categories within the realm of economic foreign policy: aid and a category named “other” (economic issues unrelated to the coded categories, but with a bearing on the government's international economic relations).

The term “aid” refers to non-commercial financial support given to a state or organisation to further its economic development goals. The first code in this category is developmental aid, relating to aid given to states and organisations for the sole purpose of development, whether economic or social. The second code represents loans provided to states and organisations for the purpose of economic recovery or development. Bailout plans are included in this particular theme. The code of “other” represents issues that do not fit into the other economic

categories mentioned in this chapter such as the policy of affirmative action or national wage negotiations. These and other issues still have an impact on the economic relations of South Africa with other states and organisations.

Figure 4.4 below represents the findings of the coding process relating to these trade union organisations' economic interests were addressed in 17 articles out of the total sample of 127. The themes of development aid and loans have a low frequency in the data sample while the theme of "other" far outnumbered the aid category. However, the code "other" showed a higher frequency than the codes of developmental aid because it included all data relating to domestic economic issues in the country such as the policy of affirmative action and the power of business in the SA economy. This reflects that although trade union organisations show an interest in economic foreign policy, these organisations are still actively involved and highly interested in economic issues that affect the domestic environment and workers.

**Figure 4.4: Frequency of aid and "other" themes**

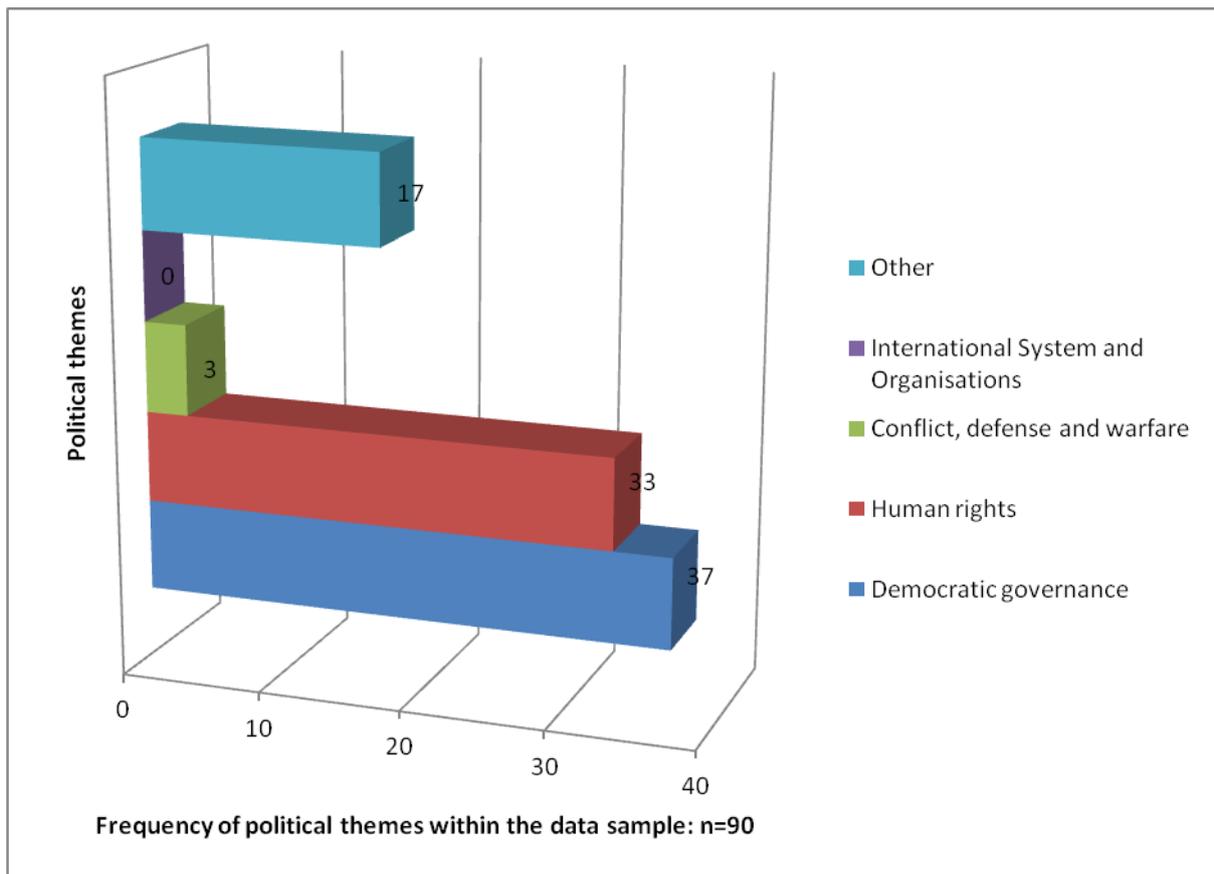


#### 4.2.5 Political themes

Political themes within foreign policy are those relating to democratic governance, the protection of human rights, conflict, defence and warfare, issues relating to the international system and international organisations, and other issues that have an impact on the political relations among states or the well-being of nations.

Figure 4.5 below represents the results of the coding process relating to these political themes. Issues that relate to democratic governance and the protection of human rights show a high prevalence within the data sample. These results reflect the organisational mission of South African trade unions. Owing to the history of trade unionism in South Africa and the legacy of apartheid, South African trade unions, actively promote democratic values and governance as the ideal political system by advocating the protection of human rights and the rights of workers. The foreign policy issues that received the most attention were the political crises in Zimbabwe, Swaziland and the conflict in the Middle East (with specific reference to the political conflict between Israel and Palestine).

In the case of trade union interest in the political unrest in Zimbabwe and Swaziland, the media articles all referred to the treatment of national trade union organisations and workers and their rights of association, freedom of speech and protest. It could be argued that the reason trade union organisations are interested in the political unrest of these neighbouring states is motivated by a sense of solidarity with other southern African trade unions. Moreover, the close proximity of these states could be another factor for the SA trade unions' interest in the pursuit of democratic change within these states.

**Figure 4.5: Frequency of political themes**

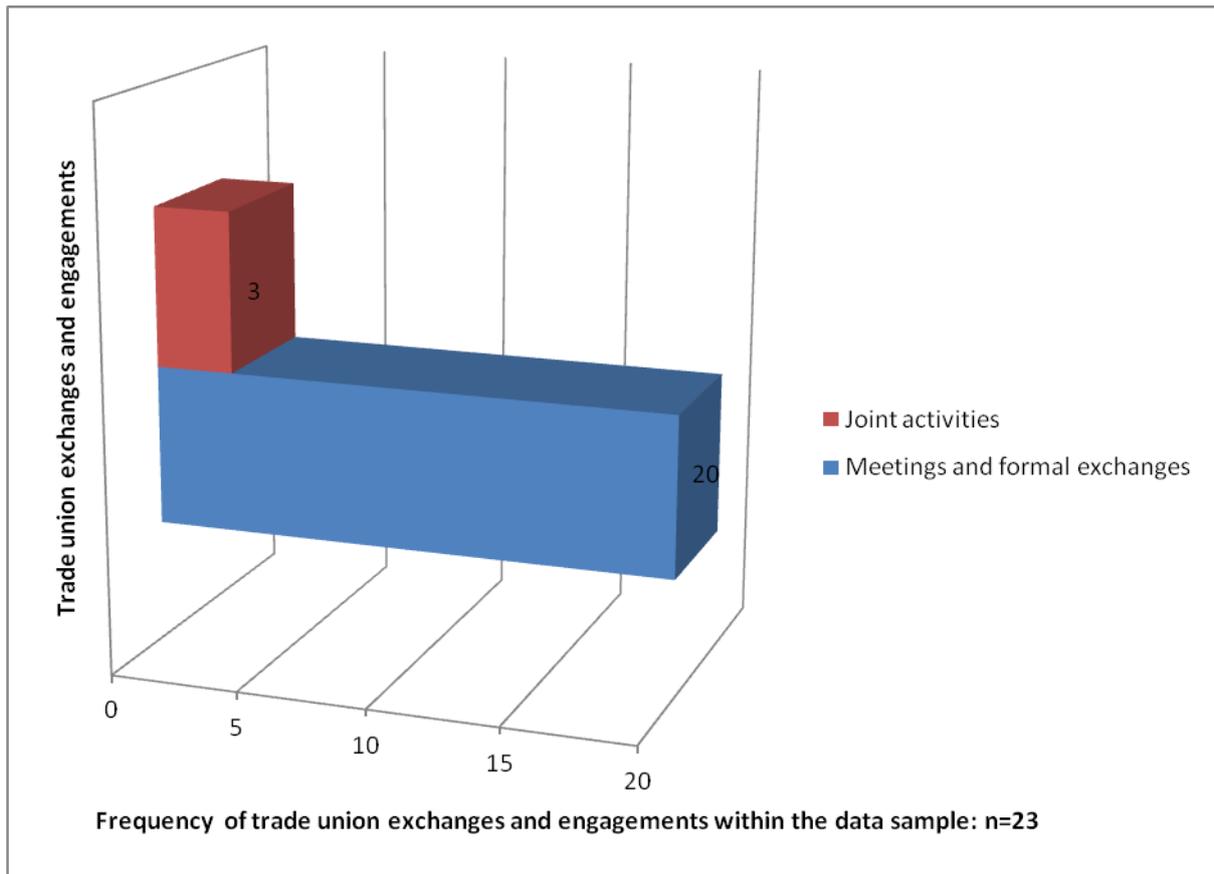
#### 4.2.6 International solidarity activities

International solidarity activities refer to those activities that serve to build and strengthen existing relations between trade union organisations to create unity among workers across national borders. These activities include formal and informal exchanges between trade union organisations as well as the provision of support services to other trade unions with the goal of strengthening trade unionism and protecting the rights of workers in other states.

As displayed in Table 4.2 above, international solidarity activities were divided into two categories: trade union exchanges and engagements and trade union support. Figure 4.6 below then, displays the frequency of the first category and its sub-categories within the data sample. Meetings and formal exchanges represent the formal and informal meetings arranged and attended by trade union organisations, including bilateral trade union meetings and international conferences. Joint activities represent the activities pursued by trade union organisations in collaboration with other trade unions, non-state actors and state actors around a particular issue. The findings displayed in Figure 4.6 below show that meetings and formal exchanges between trade union organisations outnumber the frequency of joint

activities. Most of these meetings and formal exchanges occurred between SA trade union organisations and international organisations, like the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the World Federations of Trade Unions (WFTU) and other trade union organisations like the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and the Confederation of German Trade Unions.

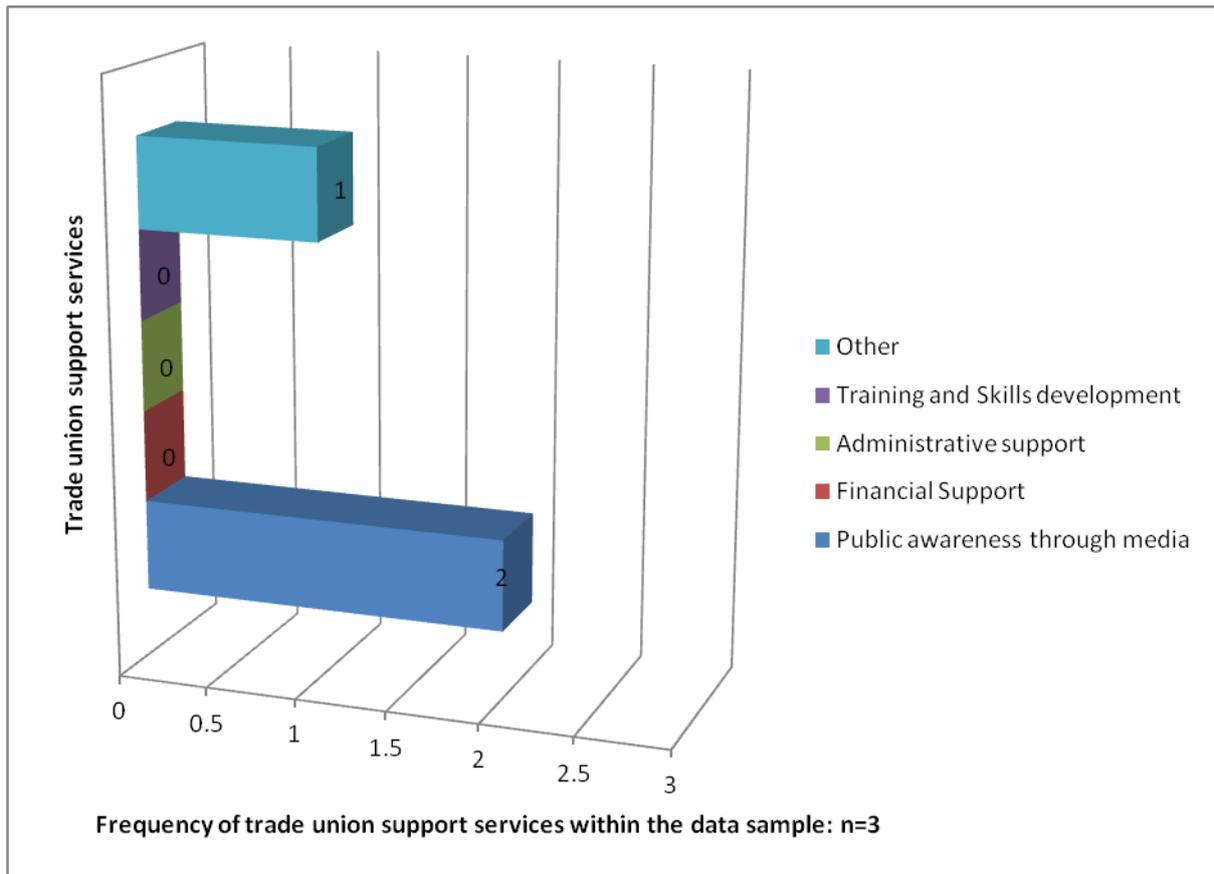
**Figure 4.6: Frequency of trade union exchanges and engagements**



Alternatively, trade union organisations also build international solidarity by offering support services to other trade union organisations abroad. (see Table 4.2 for codes and sub-categories that represent these support services). Support services include public awareness through the media, financial support, administrative support, training and skills development, and a category “other” to include activities that were not accommodated within the aforementioned categories. Figure 4.7 below displays the findings of the frequency of trade union support services within the data sample. It shows that South African trade union organisations mainly offer support to other trade union organisations via public statements through the media. Neither the data sample collected from media articles nor the statements and policy documents collected from trade union websites produced results that showed trade

union organisations providing support through financial or administrative assistance. Furthermore, with regard to the code “other” within this theme, the single occurrence within the data sample refers to the call by the Federation of Trade Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA) to the ILO to launch an investigation into the assault of Zimbabwean unionists by police officers.

**Figure 4.7: Frequency of trade union support services**

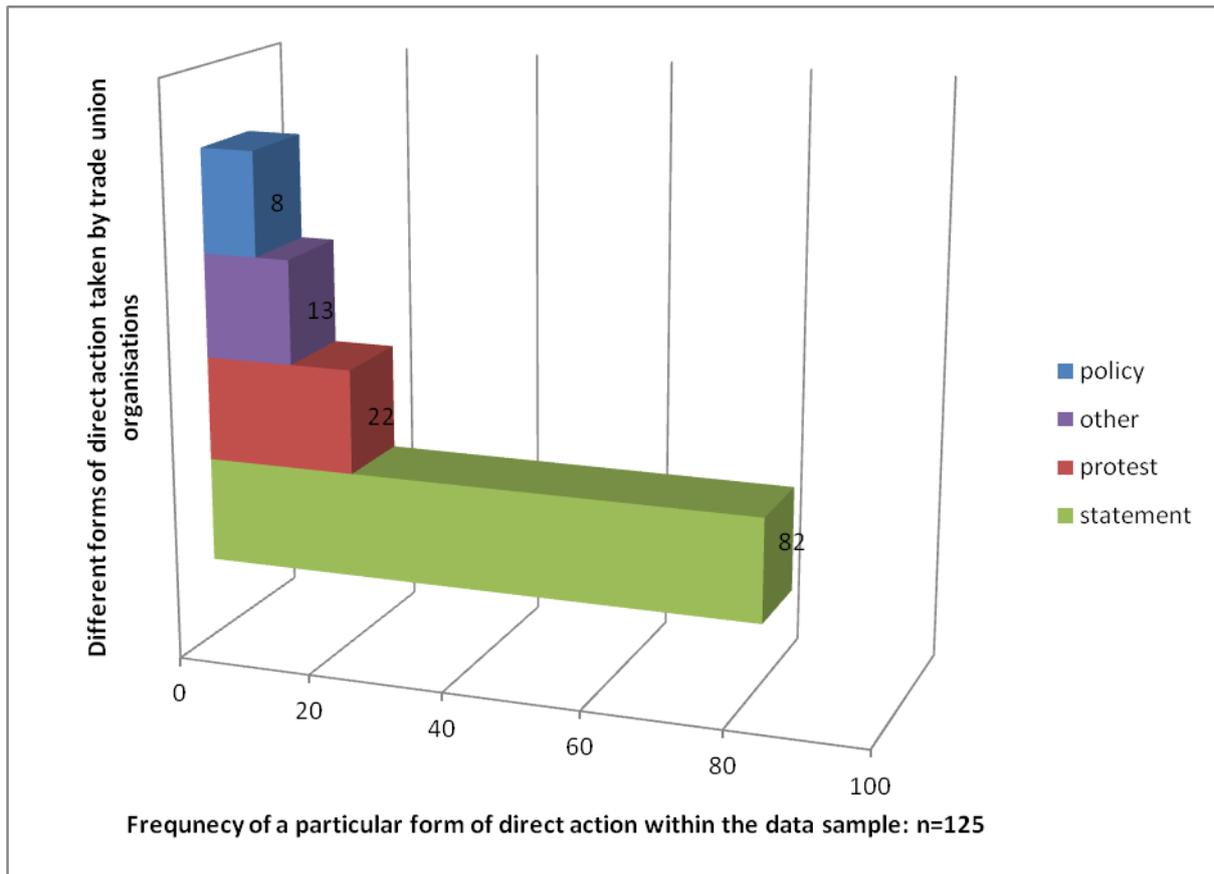


#### 4.2.7 Forms of direct action

Table 4.3 above displays the categories and codes of the different methods of direct action used by trade union organisations to make their voices heard, or to show their support or disapproval with policies and activities launched by the government. Figure 4.8 below displays the results of the coding process. The findings show that within the data sample, public statements are the most utilised form of direct action by trade unions to show their support or disapproval of a particular foreign policy issue. This is followed by protest action as an activity to display support or disapproval. Other forms of direct action pursued by trade union organisations to raise awareness or show their support for a particular issue included a) conducting research about an issue; b) launching investigations; c) legal action and

participation in advocacy campaigns launched by other non-state actors; and d) participating in electoral observation missions in other states. The findings illustrated here support the arguments made by Taylor (1989: xiv) that trade union organisations are primarily reactive and defensive in their response or role in the policy processes of the state.

**Figure 4.8: Frequency of different forms of direct action taken by trade unions in the foreign policy process and international solidarity activities**



### 4.3 Trade unions' role in the South African foreign policy process

The previous section presented the overall results gathered from coding of media articles to represent the frequency of engagement with particular issues and actions among trade unions in the SA foreign policy process. This section will present the findings and the analysis thereof focusing on each trade union organisation selected in this research study. Three trade union organisations selected for the study, were COSATU, FEDUSA and Solidariteit. To check the reliability and validity of the data found in media articles, data was also collected from the websites of these organisations using the same keywords. The data included policy documents, statements and speeches posted on the trade union website.

In this section, analysis will be guided by the analytical framework, which is governed by three arguments:

- 1) Trade union organisations are internationalist by virtue of their interests as the representative of workers.
- 2) The structure of a trade union organisation contributes to its range of activities and strategies.
- 3) Trade unions in developing countries conform to the organisational model of social movement unionism.

#### **4.3.1 The role of COSATU**

COSATU is considered the strongest and most politically influential trade union federation within South Africa. Its size and close relationship with the governing political party makes it an interesting and invaluable case study when doing research on South African trade unions. Not only is COSATU an important political actor by virtue of its alliance with the SACP and the ANC but the results from the media sources show that COSATU is also the most vocal on foreign policy issues affecting the South African government.

The most salient issues that have a bearing on COSATU's role in the foreign policy process are: a) the direction and effects of South Africa's macro-economic policy; b) bilateral trade relations with other states, particularly, China and Israel; c) issues relating to human rights and democratic governance; and d) issues relating to domestic unemployment and wages.

COSATU is most concerned with the direction of macro-economic policy issues as it argues that South Africa's macro-economic policy is in favour of international and domestic capital and not workers or the poor. The data also shows that COSATU advocates a macro-economic policy to encourage job creation in the South African economy, because it believes that the policy of inflation-targeting is not conducive to job-creation and encourages the inflow of speculative capital investment. One can infer that COSATU's interest in the direction of South Africa's economy and macro-economic policy is supported by the Congress' close relationship with the ruling party in the Tripartite Alliance.

The second issue that produced a high frequency within the data sample was COSATU's concern with South Africa's management of its bilateral trade relations. It emerged that South Africa's trade relations with China and Israel were a major concern for the trade union federation. What can be gathered from secondary data and trade union statements is that these

two countries were singled out because of their domestic political practices and alleged disregard for human rights. COSATU advocates that the South African government should negotiate a stricter trade agreement with China to prevent the import of cheap Chinese manufactured products and textiles. With reference to bilateral trade with Israel, COSATU is calling for boycotts and the severing of trade with the country to influence Israel's policy towards Palestine.

To summarise COSATU's interest in economic foreign policy, it can be inferred that their focus is on how economic foreign policy and trade relations affect the livelihood of workers and ordinary citizens in terms of employment security, and wages. Trade relations are also important to them concerning the increasing influence of foreign capital in the policies of the South African government but their main concern with economic foreign policy is how trade relations and agreements, economic policy and international capital affect the livelihoods of SA workers and how it contributes to job creation and development of the SA economy.

The data sample generated a high frequency of statements and articles written on COSATU's opinions and activism about political and social issues in foreign policy. The spread of democratic governance and the protection of democratic values and principles among states featured prominently. The strengthening of democratic values and governance and the protection of human rights emerged as the most pressing foreign policy issues spanning thirteen years and in this context the countries of most concern to COSATU were Zimbabwe, Israel and Swaziland. COSATU's activities in advocating change in these countries shows a degree of dedication and determination. Based on the constancy of their activities and advocacy around the abuse of power and the violation of human rights within these states the focus was on the strengthening of democracy and human rights. The objectives of the activities and advocacy around these issues centred on urging the South African government to act more decisively and urgently about the political crises in these states. It should be noted that COSATU's activities in Zimbabwe are largely confined to its relations with the Zimbabwean trade union, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). One can infer that COSATU's interest in two countries in particular - Swaziland and Zimbabwe - stems from its close solidarity with trade unions in those neighbouring countries.

COSATU's role in the foreign policy process of South Africa is largely motivated by its organisational objectives as well as its institutional role in the Tripartite Alliance. Professor Roger Southall opined that COSATU's interest in the domestic policies of human rights and democracy in other states can be influenced by their organisational goal of increasing the

bargaining power of trade union organisations and workers in those states to stamp out the abuse of labour and cheap labour practices (Southall, 2013).

COSATU is the largest trade union federation in South Africa and possesses strong institutional power and organisational influence. The results show that the trade union federation enjoys frequent media attention by using mainly the tactics of a) advocacy and activism through media statements and publicity, b) protest action and c) participation in the policy processes of government. Its activities and statements on foreign policy issues also feature prominently in the English-medium news websites. Also, it is the only trade union organisation selected for this research study that uses the tactic of direct protest action to influence or voice their opinion in the process. Although one cannot infer, on the basis of this finding, whether direct protest action ultimately gives COSATU an influence over government within the foreign policy process, the trade union federation, through these protests, has the ability to create public awareness and drive media attention to focus on these protests - ultimately generating public awareness of these issues. Also, while COSATU is not a powerful political decision-maker in the policy-making process, it enjoys considerable media attention because it is considered a strong civil society organisation representing the interests of a powerful social group in South Africa – labour.

Furthermore, COSATU plays an active role in the economic policy processes of South Africa, although mostly in domestic economic policy and economic foreign policy-making. The trade union federation has developed frequent submissions of review into domestic and trade policy including South Africa's immigration policy and the submission of the SADC protocol on trade. However, it is unclear whether an active role in the policy process actually materialises in having an influence in policy-making.

#### **4.3.2 The role of FEDUSA**

FEDUSA presents an interesting case as it is the second largest trade union federation in South Africa and yet enjoys less media coverage than Solidariteit, which is much smaller. FEDUSA was founded on the principles of political independence and the pursuit of a democratic labour environment. Furthermore, the trade union federation believes in the process of collective bargaining, international solidarity as well as the tactical approaches of peaceful negotiation and engagement with business and government.

The research findings showed that FEDUSA's engagement in the foreign policy process was motivated by the following factors: a) global employment-creation; b) the spread and

strengthening of democratic governance and values; and c) an active role in international organisations and policy-making. Based on qualitative analysis of statements made by FEDUSA, it can be inferred that the federation prefers to engage and actively participate in international trade union and economic organisations to get involved in the foreign policies between states, particularly those issues relating to political economic governance and relationships among state actors.

In an interview, FEDUSA's general secretary Dennis George (2013), highlighted that trade with other states, besides the European Union, should be a foreign policy priority. He added that trade agreements should pay attention to the rights of labour on both sides to ensure fair competition between trade partners. Furthermore, he argued that South Africa should increase trade with other developing countries particularly from the Global South, as it brings fresh opportunities for job creation and the potential of growing markets in which to sell South African goods and services.

Mr George's statements explain the federation's active involvement in international economic conferences and forums, participating in the Trade Union Advisory Committee plenary session of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and taking part in the World Economic Forum. Apart from the federation's participation in forums and conferences hosted by international organisations such as the ILO and the IMF, FEDUSA also participates in the Education International World Congress and the G20 proceedings, with the objective of discussing the causes and solutions to global unemployment levels and to urge states to be more pro-active in their strategies to create jobs.

FEDUSA's strategy of influence is active engagement and regular discussion with government departments on issues of trade relations and economic policy. Furthermore, the federation plays an active role in international organisations, using its participation in these organisations as a platform to engage with other trade union organisations, as well as state and non-state actors. However, despite its active engagement on international platforms and its position as the second largest trade union federation in the country, FEDUSA enjoys little media coverage. Instead, the trade union federation uses its website to create awareness among its members and to announce its activities in foreign policy processes. When asked about the role in foreign policy-making process, Dennis George made an interesting statement that FEDUSA actively engages with DIRCO on economic foreign policy matters. He argued further that DIRCO, during President Zuma's term, has gained a greater presence in economic foreign policy (George, 2013).

What can be inferred from the data results is that although FEDUSA has a less aggressive and publicised role in South Africa's policy processes, the federation is experienced and actively involved in the foreign policy processes of South Africa by extending its role beyond domestic issues. FEDUSA is actively involved in international economic and financial organisations and seeks to make its contribution to economic policy and the strengthening of labour organisations through these forums.

#### **4.3.3 The role of Solidariteit**

Solidariteit, formerly known as the Mynwerkersunie (MWU), is a trade union organisation founded on the principles of Christianity, political independence and the value of self-reliance. The trade union represents workers from the mining, medical, agricultural and cement industries, the metal and engineering industry, the electrical and aviation industries as well as from the communication, chemical, financial and professional services industries, and various individual members from other industries not included in the above-mentioned collectives (Solidariteit, n.d.). Solidariteit, like the other trade union organisations used for this study is dedicated to the practice of collective bargaining, job protection and the improvement of service conditions and, like FEDUSA, it is a non-affiliated organisation and therefore not associated with any political party in South Africa.

What sets it apart from the other TU organisations in this study is that it is the only trade union organisation that has close ties with the Afrikaans community, and it is dedicated to the protection of minorities in the democratic context (Solidariteit, n.d.). Moreover, in contrast to the ideological principles of COSATU, Solidariteit is committed to the economic order of free competition and responsible labour relations within a free market economy (Solidariteit, n.d.). Another important structural difference between Solidariteit and the other two organisations featured in this study is that Solidarity is not a federation of trade unions but an individual trade union representing a variety of industry collectives and individual members (Solidariteit, n.d.). The organisational structure and the principles of the organisation can provide important insights into the relationship between the structure of the organisation and the findings that were produced during data analysis.

It is the argument of this dissertation that Solidariteit conforms more to the organisational style of business unionism – a trade union that is narrowly focused on the interests and benefits of its membership and support base. Although this means a primary focus on domestic, economic and political policy, Solidariteit uses international structures, such as the

International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) to influence change in domestic labour legislation and domestic policies of South Africa. Furthermore, the statements of this organisation largely feature in Afrikaans news publications which can be attributed to the organisation's identity and historical support from the Afrikaans communities. Nonetheless, the comparatively small size of the union does not prevent it from playing an active role in international trade union organisations, like the ILO and the ITUC.

The main issues of interest for Solidariteit that appeared during analysis were the legality and abuse of the policy of affirmative action and the global increase of xenophobic violence and unemployment. These issues were taken up by this organisation in its frequent requests to international trade union organisations to intervene in these matters. According to the trade union, the policy of affirmative action is contributing to rising unemployment levels within the white and coloured communities - Solidariteit's primary membership base. The research findings also show that Solidariteit is only interested in the capital investment into and out of the country when it directly affects its members. It is interesting to note that the trade union does not engage or participate in direct support and activities with international trade unions, but rather through the international trade union and labour organisations.

Another finding of the research is that Solidariteit prefers to use formal tactics and channels of advocacy and rarely participates in strike action or protest. Its favoured strategies of advocacy are media statements, awareness-creation through research, and investigation and legal action.

What can be inferred from the findings is that Solidariteit engages primarily in domestic policy issues. Hence, the trade union's engagements with international labour organisations were only motivated by seeking support from these organisations against particular domestic policies such as affirmative action. Furthermore, the trade union only becomes vocal on foreign policy process when it affects its members, for example mergers between domestic and international companies that have the potential to enforce retrenchments and disregard labour rights in South Africa.

To summarise, the trade union uses the tactical strategies of media publicity and statements as well as engagement with international labour organisations to influence policy changes. It hardly uses protest action, but utilises legal strategy and research to influence policy decision-making.

#### 4.4 Concluding remarks

The aim of data analysis was to find out which factors have a bearing on the role of trade unions within South Africa's foreign policy. Analysis was conducted using a method of content analysis, customised for this particular study. The data sample of media articles were coded and quantitatively analysed, while the statements and policies collected from trade union websites were analysed using a qualitative approach by applying the analytical framework to the findings.

What the findings presented in this chapter show, is that South African trade unions have an interest in South Africa's foreign policy processes only as far as it affects the livelihood of workers and citizens. This can be illustrated in the high frequency of macro-economic issues and trade-related issues found within the data sample. The high frequency of economic foreign policy issues within the data sample confirms the theoretical arguments proffered in Chapter Two – trade union organisations are essentially driven by the interests of their members – salaried workers. For example, issues relating to developmental aid and sovereign loans presented a low frequency within the data sample, whereas issues relating to international capital investments and mergers between foreign corporations and national corporations showed a higher frequency in the data sample. This can be explained by the fear among all three trade union organisations chosen for this study that international capital is largely speculative and that the job security of workers can be compromised by mergers. These findings above correlate with the findings drawn from statements and policies collected from the websites of the three trade union organisations COSATU, FEDUSA and Solidariteit. Based on the analysis of statements from each organisation, it appears that they are all concerned with economic foreign policy only if it applies to the interest of their members or affects the livelihood and employment security of South African workers.

In terms of their interest in the international trade relations of South Africa, it appears that bilateral trade receives greater attention than multilateral trade. An interesting finding drawn from data analysis is that trade union organisations are most concerned with South Africa's bilateral trade relations with countries that have questionable human and labour rights records such as Israel and the PRC. Ultimately, the findings showed that although economic foreign policy can be considered a valued interest among South African trade unions, particularly when it has the potential to affect workers and the broader society of SA, trade union organisations are still largely concerned with domestic economic policy and issues, specifically issues regarding employment security and wage increases.

Although the findings reveal an essential concern with the economic interests of their trade union members, their concern about the state's political relations with other states is equated with the issue of the state's economic relations. Issues relating to the protection of human rights and legitimate and stable democratic governance showed a higher frequency than the other categories in the data sample. This can be explained by the organisational nature and history of South African trade unions in championing the rights of workers – which are essentially about human rights. It also reflects the disapproval among trade union organisations of South Africa's trade relations with Israel and the PRC, given widespread criticisms in the international sphere of those countries' human rights records.

On the theme of political factors, an interesting comparison was made in the analysis from results drawn from media articles and statements found on trade union websites. It was found that although trade union organisations emphasise their commitment to the protection of human and labour rights and the promotion of democratic values and governance, their statements and comments often do not materialise into direct and purposeful action. In other words, the method of direct action or activity used to display disapproval and opposition does not match the severity of the statements made. The implication is that a gap exists between the rhetoric proffered by trade union organisations and their commitment to action after proclamations of support and disapproval.

Other findings presented in this chapter are that South African trade union organisations, particularly COSATU and FEDUSA are actively involved in international labour and economic organisations and have close ties with trade unions across borders particularly with trade unions from other African states. However, data gathered from the Solidariteit website produced a low frequency of activities relating to international solidarity with other trade union organisations. This can be explained by the fact that the trade union is mostly concerned with domestic economic issues and the interests of their members. The findings also show the preferred method of advocacy is through the media and public statements rather than more direct forms of action such as protests and legal action. This implies that South African trade unions play a more passive and indirect role in the foreign policy process. It is also interesting to note that FEDUSA and Solidariteit do not use direct protest action but prefer legal methods and public media statements to create awareness of foreign policy issues or to advocate foreign policy proposals.

The involvement of South African trade union organisations in the foreign policy process is consonant with the arguments made in Chapters Two and Three, that trade union

organisations, like other non-state actors, contribute to the creation of public awareness on foreign policy issues rather than directly influencing the foreign policy process and policy itself.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The findings presented in Chapter Four imply that trade union organisations engage in foreign policy debates and discussion. To discuss this argument further, this chapter sets out to summarise and contextualise the findings presented in Chapter Four with the literature review and theoretical arguments made in Chapters Two and Three. The first section revisits the rationale and research question proposed in this study in an attempt to discuss whether the aims of this research were met. Included in that section is a brief summary of the findings presented in Chapter Four and a discussion of the problems and limitations that could affect the scope and validity of the arguments made in Chapter Four. The second section discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the research findings and arguments drawn from data analysis. The third section provides suggestions of topics for further and future research on the role of trade union organisations in the foreign policy process. Thereafter, the chapter concludes with final thoughts and remarks.

### **5.2 Rationale and research question**

The rationale for this study was to explore trade union participation in the foreign policy process of South Africa to learn more about the role of domestic non-state actors in this process. This study was inspired by recent foreign policy debates and events in South Africa in which trade unions began to advocate foreign policy preferences and criticised government decisions. The literature reviewed in Chapters Two and Three yielded very few studies that were focused on exploring trade union engagement in the foreign policy processes of developing countries. All this served as the rationale for this study – to explore further the trade union involvement in the foreign policy process, usually a largely state-centred process, and to build on the limited number of studies focusing on trade unions in the context of developing countries.

Following this rationale, the study proposed to achieve three core aims: a) to review the literature on the political and international role of trade union organisations in historical context; b) to briefly contextualise the foreign policy process of South Africa from 1994 until 2012 and the role played by interest groups within that process; and c) to analyse the role of trade union organisations in South Africa's foreign policy process from 1999 until 2012 drawing on secondary and primary data sources. The third aim was geared towards answering

the research question proposed for this study. The next section will provide a summary of the main findings of this research.

### **5.2.1 Summary of findings**

The proposed research question of this study was:

*What role have trade unions played in South Africa's foreign policy processes in the post-apartheid era, and what are the factors that have had a bearing in this regard?*

To answer the research question, this study focused on three South African trade union organisations: COSATU, FEDUSA and Solidariteit. The period under scrutiny was the post-apartheid era, specifically from 1999 until October 2012. Furthermore, the study defined the foreign policy procedure as the continuous exercise through which a state plans, develops, implements, negotiates and evaluates its political and economic relations with other states, as well as its international image, taking into consideration external and internal feedback and influences. It was thought that an exploration of the role of trade unions could explain and uncover trends in their international activities and lead to better understanding of the part that interest groups could play in foreign policy activities.

It was found that economic and political factors both have a bearing on the contribution of trade union organisations in South Africa's foreign policy. Economic factors that had the most influence on their role related to issues of a) macro-economic policy; b) international investments; and c) South African trade relations. Political factors that had the most bearing on trade union activity in the foreign policy process of South Africa were issues regarding the protection of human rights and the strength and spread of democratic governance.

#### **5.2.1.1 Economic factors**

South African trade union organisations are most concerned about the extent to which macro-economic policy favours domestic constituencies or international investors. Trade union organisations, therefore, advocate a pro-poor and pro-labour macro-economic policy that is geared towards job-creation and lower interest rates. Investment and trade issues are also high on their agenda due the alleged effects of increased trade and speculative investment on the domestic economy and the economic security of labour.

### ***5.2.1.2 Political factors***

The protection of human rights and the strengthening of democracy are core values among South African trade union organisations. The argument of this study is that these values stem from the political history of apartheid South Africa and the role that labour played in the country's political economy. However, it was found that South African trade unions largely became interested in the affairs of other states only when it affected the trade union organisations of that country or the rights and freedoms of workers in general. This observation corresponds with an earlier argument made on the extent to which economic factors have a bearing on these organisations' interest in foreign policy processes in section 4.2. In addition, it was found that there is a discrepancy between the severity of statements made by trade union organisations on their official websites and the type of action taken to express agreement or opposition with a particular foreign policy decision implemented by government.

### ***5.2.1.3 Activities of international solidarity***

This study also analysed the three trade union organisations' engagement with other trade unions across national borders. It was found that COSATU and FEDUSA appeared to have strong relationships with international trade unions as well as being active in international economic forums and international trade union organisations. Moreover, it was found that SA trade union relations with foreign trade unions are mostly focused on African trade union solidarity. Although there are accounts where SA trade union organisations engage with trade unions outside of Africa, these cases are few. It is also interesting to note that support activities between SA trade union organisations and their international counterparts are not as apparent and are only evident in formal and symbolic meetings and engagements between trade unions.

### ***5.2.1.4 Methods of direct action***

The methods used by SA trade union organisations in advocating certain policy objectives and directions frequently create public awareness of foreign policy issues through media statements and publicity. In addition to media statements, legal action, investigations launched by the trade unions themselves, and participation in advocacy campaigns launched by other non-state actors also featured prominently in the data sample. Protest action is a popular method of creating public awareness and drawing attention to trade union policy stances, but within the data sample, it was found that COSATU was the only trade union

organisation that used protest action as a means of influencing a change in foreign policy. The methods of FEDUSA and Solidariteit were primarily to release media statements and pursue legal action. Moreover, a direct role in the foreign policy-making process seldom featured in the data sample, and this therefore supports the argument made in Chapters Two and Three that trade union organisations play a limited, if minimal role in the foreign policy-making process.

#### ***5.2.1.5 Final remarks***

This research study could not make substantive arguments regarding whether SA trade union organisations have a defined and influential role in the making of foreign policy. While FEDUSA claimed that it engaged in regular meetings and discussions with DIRCO policymakers on various issues regarding South African foreign policy decisions, the findings imply that, South African trade union organisations do not play a direct or influential role in the foreign policy process.

South African foreign policy is largely a state-centred activity and although it, theoretically allows non-state actors to play a viable role, in practice this role is rendered minimal and insignificant to the making of foreign policy. This reflects the arguments made in Chapter Three, that although the constitution allows non-state and civil society groups to participate in the foreign policy-making procedures, neither the state nor non-state actors show a determined will or possess the man-power and resources to implement this type of inclusive participation. However, this study does show that non-state actors do at least create public awareness on foreign policy issues and decisions made by government.

#### **5.2.2 Scope and limitations**

As proposed above, this section is dedicated to discussing the problems faced during the course of the research that could have placed a limit on the scope and validity of the findings presented in Chapter Four, as well as the conclusions made in this chapter.

This research could have benefited from the use of an alternative textual data source i.e., printed newspaper sources dating from 1994 until 2012; however, due to limited time and resources, the use of online news-media proved to be a convenient and efficient source of data. For the purpose of the study, therefore, and to answer the research question, the collection of media articles from online news websites was sufficient. However, if printed newspapers were sourced from the archives of these publications, it could have broadened the scope of the research and contributed to richer analysis. Future studies and research on this

topic, using a similar methodology should set aside enough time to contact and visit the archives of news publications. Researchers should create a thorough and realistic data collection timetable and sampling technique for effective data collection.

The analytical validity of the research could be affected by the failure to obtain access to personal interviews with key informants. The researcher tried to obtain interviews with representatives of COSATU, FEDUSA and Solidariteit as well as commentaries from Professor Roger Southall. The researcher obtained interviews with Professor Roger Southall from the University of Witwatersrand and FEDUSA's General Secretary, Mr Dennis George. Such interviews made a valuable contribution to understanding the research findings and analysis of this study. Researchers interested in conducting further research on this topic are advised to secure interviews with all of the trade union organisations selected in the study.

### **5.3 Theoretical and practical implications**

The study undertook an exploration of the factors that concern trade union organisations in the foreign policy affairs of South Africa. This section will discuss the theoretical and practical implications of this study.

The findings show that South African trade union organisations have a reasonable level of interest in the foreign policy process. Their interest is motivated by the interests and economic wellbeing of their support-base. However, it is unclear whether these organisations play an influential role in the foreign policy-making process. Nonetheless, the findings of the study do imply that trade union organisations and their opinions on foreign policy issues should not be ignored. The findings of this research supports the argument that trade union organisations, like other non-state actors, play an important part in the creation of public awareness about issues that are considered outside the public interest, particularly groups usually marginalised from the foreign policy process. Public opinion on foreign policy issues and decision-making can become a crucial factor in the case of a foreign policy event that concerns the resources, manpower or domestic development of a nation. Trade union organisations, as shown in this particular study, are representatives of an important political and economic constituency in South Africa – labour. It can be said then, that trade union organisations enable the democratization of foreign policy debates and discussions.

It is apparent that trade union organisations want to play a more influential role in all policy-making processes, including the foreign policy process; however, it is unclear whether their intention is mere rhetoric or whether they have the resources and will-power to extend their

domestic activities and interest beyond national borders. Nevertheless, if trade union organisations are serious about making a greater contribution in the foreign policy process, their increased activism could secure them a larger stake in the foreign policy process.

The possibility of the engagement of non-state actors in the foreign policy process begs the question whether foreign policy should be democratised. The findings presented in this dissertation are not enough to support a positive or negative answer. However, the strong interest among trade union organisations on how the government manages and implements foreign policy, and trade union interest in international issues that do not directly concern domestic politics, is an indication of their increasing presence in the foreign policy process, whether direct or indirect. This does not imply that the state will reduce its role as primary actor in the international system, but as international relations and the foreign policies of states become more complex, these policies may originate from a variety of sources other than state bureaucracy. Certainly, the foreign policies of states will either remain static or change as the international system experiences changes, and so too will our understanding of the entire process change as new foreign policy events present opportunities for further study.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for future studies**

The role of interest groups in foreign policy presents an interesting field of study within the disciplines of public policy analysis as well as the study of interest groups and their political activities and interests. The rationale for this study was to explore the participation of trade unions in the South African foreign policy process because existing studies and literature only provide a limited discussion of this topic. Secondly, this study was also motivated by the growing interest among South African trade unions, particularly COSATU, in the foreign policy decisions and implementation exercised by the South African government. Thirdly, existing literature on the involvement of trade unions in foreign policy focus largely on trade unions from developed countries but fewer studies have been conducted on this topic within the context of developing countries.

It would be interesting to conduct a study to explore the perspectives of trade union leadership on trade union contribution to foreign policy instead of only from an organisational perspective. Perhaps a future study focusing on group dynamics within the executive level of the trade union could also provide insights into the motivations behind the advocacy of one issue over another. Such a focus on group decision-making could reveal

whether the interest in advocating particular foreign policy objectives emerge from influential individuals or from the principles and values of the organisation.

Another insightful study could emerge from conducting a longitudinal study on the role of trade union organisations in foreign policy processes. This study could track the activities and statements of trade union organisations over a ten to fifteen year period, taking an in-depth look at how the trade union organisations' engagement in foreign policy processes has fluctuated over a particular period. This study, with sufficient resources available, could also track the contextual significance of these fluctuations to explore whether their involvement is shaped by historical context.

Another rationale for future research could be a comparative study between trade union organisations from different countries. It would be interesting to compare the role and activities of trade union organisations from developing countries with their counterparts in developed countries: Do these organisations have different motivations for engaging in the foreign policy process? What are the factors within their national context that motivate their role in the foreign policy process? Are there any similarities in the engagement in the foreign policy between trade union organisations from developing countries and those from developed countries, and what lessons can be learnt from these similarities and differences?

The brief comparative discussion of this study focusing on three media-prominent South African trade union organisations: COSATU, FEDUSA and Solidariteit could benefit from a similar study focusing on each trade union organisation separately. Such an in-depth study could provide better understanding of the trade union organisation itself and investigate the degree of influence a particular trade union organisation has over government and the foreign policy process.

Although not directly related to the topic, it could be insightful to explore the perspectives and viewpoints of trade union members on the engagement of their representative trade union in the foreign policy process. In the South African context, where unemployment is high and the membership rates of trade union organisations are in decline, it would be interesting to explore whether trade union members support the engagement on their union in the foreign policy process, let alone international policy forums.

## 5.5 Conclusion

Although it has been argued that trade union organisations are experiencing a decline in their membership and their role in the policy-making process, these organisations are still viable actors in civil society and the economic environment. While the findings of this study support the arguments of South African trade union scholars and scholars of foreign policy-making that the trade unions, like other non-state actors, play a minimal if non-existent role in the foreign policy-making process - these actors cannot be entirely excluded from the process. The core argument of this dissertation, based on the findings, is that South African trade union organisations have on the one hand created public awareness of foreign policy issues through media statements, protests or advocacy campaigns. Their motivations, on the other hand, as shown in Chapter Two and Three are primarily the interests of their members – the South African labour force.

This study, therefore, contributes to an understudied phenomenon about non-state actors in the foreign policy processes in the context of developing countries. It offers some insight into the factors that motivate an interest in this regard and the reasons underpinning this interest. While the foreign policy process in itself remains the domain of the state, this study, like others cited in the literature reviews above, show that non-state actors are not to be ignored as they garner the support of the masses against, or in support of the decisions and policies implemented by the government's foreign affairs diplomacy.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Code Memo

#### Foreign policy process

The literature shows that trade unions are political pressure groups that have an interest in ensuring that the government implements policies that are aligned with their interests. In the case of South Africa, trade unions often play the role of political watchdogs and bastions of democracy and human rights. To explore the role of trade unions in the foreign policy process of South Africa, and the factors that stimulate this role, I have created codes that represent issue-areas and factors that, through careful reading of the data, exhibit the most salient issues on the agenda of trade unions.

#### Economics

Trade unions are by virtue of their existence both economic and political interest groups. They represent the economic and work-related interests of their members, making the economy and all factors that have a bearing to it, their main priority. The following areas of interest were selected based on their frequency of appearance in the data.

Macro-economic policy: Although it exists in the national domain, the interconnectedness of state economies has drawn macro-economic policy into the realm of the global economy. For the purpose of the study three factors that relate to macroeconomic policy have been singled out: Exchange controls; employment; and prices. These are three of the main issues that have caused tension between the government and trade unions regarding foreign economic policy.

These categories will be represented by the following codes:

Foreign policy (economics):	Fe
Macroeconomic policy:	macro
Exchange controls:	1
Employment:	2
Prices:	3

Therefore an article dealing with the SA economy and expressing trade union calls for a weakening or strengthening of the South African exchange controls or strengthening of the Rand would be coded like this: Fe: macro1

**Investment:** Developing countries are often dependent on developmental aid and foreign direct investment. Investment, particularly foreign direct investments have become a hot topic for trade unions, based on the ease with which these investments can be taken out of the country. Furthermore, it is general opinion that the strength of SA trade unions is a factor in the driving away of FDI into the country (Daniels & Kindra, 2001; Hlangani, 2001). The following factors have been included in tracking the role of trade unions in economic foreign policy: international capital investments (FDI or portfolio investments); Mergers (international companies investing in SA companies); the activities of domestic capital internationally.

These categories will be represented by the following codes:

Investment:	invest
International capital:	1
Mergers:	2
Domestic capital:	3

Therefore an article dealing with trade union advocacy against an international company merging with a domestic company would be coded like this: Fe: invest2

**International Trade:** This makes up the core activity of economic foreign policy: establishing deals and trade relations with other states. However, even international trade has often been an issue of interest among trade unions mainly because of the reputation of some of South Africa's trading partners. I focus on two areas of trade: bilateral (trade relations

between two countries); and multilateral (trade relations between three or more countries). In the latter, I include South Africa's role in multilateral economic organisations such as the World Trade Organisation and the IMF. In addition to these two areas of trade, I will also identify the trade partner and organisation name in the code. This will make the processing of data easier and provide for a more relevant analysis.

The above-mentioned factors will be represented by the following codes:

International trade:	trade
Bilateral:	1
Multilateral:	2

Therefore an article in which trade unions have voiced their opposition to trading with, for example, Israel, the code will look like this: Fe: trade1\_Israel

**Financial Aid:** This category accounts for financial transactions that are not for any economic profit or benefit but in the spirit of development and the strength of the global economy. Two categories have been singled out in coding these transactions: development aid (including money given to states to help their economies and in support of developmental projects) and loans (including those given to state as part of a bail-out package).

The categories will be represented by the following codes:

Financial aid:	aid
Development aid:	1
Loans:	2

Therefore, if a trade union calls for the provision of development aid to a state in support of democracy, it will be coded as follows: Fe: aid1

Other: This category has been included to accommodate any other factors or issues relating to the economy that has not been included in the codes above.

### Politics

South African trade unions have an interest in the way South Africa conducts its international political relations with other states (Calland, 2006). South Africa's foreign policy is largely influenced by the principles upheld in the country's constitution. The way in which government deals with a violation of human rights and democratic governance internationally, is often considered an expression of their respect for the democratic rights and human rights of its citizens. The following political issues have been singled out based on the process of data-driven coding.

Political Concerns in foreign policy:		Fp
1. Democracy:	South African trade unions have a strong interest in democratic governance. Democracy is based on the principle of public participation and the interests of national citizens. This category includes issues relating to effective governance and inclusive government as well as the tolerance of opposition and protest.	
2. Human rights:	Human rights include issues relating to the protection of basic human rights as contained in the UN Declarations of Human Rights: political and civil rights; social rights and group rights. Rights that pertain to freedom of assembly and association are particularly important to trade unions globally.	
3. Conflict:	Issues pertaining to international state conflict, including the sale of weapons, nuclear weapon proliferation and hosting individuals who have committed alleged crimes against humanity and war.	
4. International system:	Issues relating to the state of the international system and equality among states.	
5. Other:	Issues not specifically included in the above categories	

Therefore, an article in which trade unions voice their opposition to a state in which human rights have been violated, it will be coded like this: Fp2\_China

**International solidarity among trade unions**

The expression of international solidarity among trade unions is the foremost activity in which trade unions engage internationally. For this reason, I have made international solidarity among trade unions a separate category, as it encompasses a variety of activities in itself. Expressions of international solidarity usually comprise the following activities: trade unions exchanges and engagements; organisational support and direct action launched by trade unions in solidarity with other unions. These categories will be coded as follows:

Trade union exchanges and engagements: This category describes the direct engagements and meetings between trade unions including international labour or trade unions conferences as well as talks between union leaders. It also includes the exchange of labour attache’s and the arrangement of country tours. Under this category, joint activities between unions will also be included. Joint activities describe the projects, and developmental programs undertake by unions to fulfil developmental or societal goals.

The categories mentioned above will be represented by the following codes:

Trade exchanges and engagements:	Tex
Meetings:	1
Joint activities	2

Trade union support:

This category entails activities through which trade unions assist other trade unions with their activities or programs. These include public statements through the media and arranging campaigns to create awareness on issues or challenges facing other unions. Another act of solidarity is the provision of financial aid and support. Administrative support and functions can also be shared between unions as well as the provision of training to union leaders.

The categories mentioned above will be represented by the following codes:

Trade union support:	Ts
Media:	1
Financial:	2
Administrative:	3
Training:	4
Other:	5

Direct action:

This category includes direct action taken by unions, internationally or nationally to show support for trade unions across national borders. Trade unions can do this through a variety of means. This study focusses on three main forms of direct action. The first being policy lobbying: trade unions advocate, produce or attempt to influence policy-making through direct and indirect channels in support of a particular cause. Second, protest is the most successful means through which trade unions apply pressure to government. This category includes the use of picketing, boycotts, blockades and marches. Finally, trade unions often use the

media to bring their message across through public statements. The study also includes a category “Other” to represent activities that fall outside of the usual means pursued by trade unions.

The categories mentioned above will be represented by the following codes:

Direct Action:	Tact
Policy influence:	policy
Protect action:	protest
Public statements through media:	statement
Other:	other+activity

## **Appendix B: Interview Guide**

These questions were formulated in a manner to allow for a semi-structured interview. The questions were framed in this manner to ensure neutrality. The structure allowed for an open discussion about the topic rather than sticking to a rigid structure that could have limited the opportunity for complete and reliable responses.

### **Interview Questions – Academics and experts in the field**

- Do you think trade unions play a role in SA's foreign policy process?
- How would you describe that role?
- Which foreign policy process, in your opinion have trade unions played a formative role?
- What, in your opinion, are the reasons for trade union involvement or participation in the foreign policy process?

### **Interview questions – Representatives of trade union organisations**

- How does (TRADE UNION) see its role as an actor in South Africa's political environment?
- What are the issues that (TRADE UNION) considers priority regarding South Africa's future, both in the domestically and internationally?
- What has been (TRADE UNION)'s role in policy-making in South Africa?
- Does (TRADE UNION) see itself as having an interest in the way foreign policy is made in South Africa?
- What has been the role of (TRADE UNION) in foreign policy-making or international relations of South Africa?
- Are there any particular interests or issues with reference to international relations that (TRADE UNION) is advocating to be prioritised?
- What has been (TRADE UNION)'s role in the broader region of Southern Africa?
- Does (TRADE UNION) have an interest in the way foreign policy is made and implemented in South Africa? (Why/why not?)

- What are the issues that (TRADE UNION) considers priority or that deserve precedence in South Africa's foreign policy?
- Could trade union federations, like (TRADE UNION), strengthen their organisation's domestic role and influence by participating in international organisations and international forums?
- In your opinion, how does (TRADE UNION)'s participation in international organisations and forums, like the ILO and World Economic Forum, serve the goals and objectives of the organisation?
- What is (TRADE UNION)'s stance on the role of South Africa in international economic forums and groupings like BRICSA?
- What is (TRADE UNION)'s stance on South Africa's economic and political role on the African continent?
- What has been the role of (TRADE UNION) in foreign policy-making or international relations of South Africa?